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JULY/AUGUST 2002

Dungeon®

July/August 2002
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WRITER'S GUIDELINES 102
The newly revised *Dungeon Magazine* Writer's Guidelines will start you on the road to seeing your adventures appear in these pages.

"The infernal storm, eternal in its rage, sweeps and drives the spirits with its blast; it whirls them, lashing them with punishment. When they are swept back past their place of judgment then come the shrieks, laments, and anguished cries; there they blaspheme God's almighty power.
—Dante Alighieri,
The Divine Comedy, "**Inferno**." *cto. 5, l. 31-6.*

COVER
The small village of Ruvian stands no chance against the Thunder Champion—illustrated here by Scott Schomburg—and his cloud giant troops when they ride forth to seek the Storm Lord's vengeance in "The Storm Lord's Keep."

A MATTER OF SCALE

Some say high-level play is problematic, that it epitomizes the "munchkinness" of D&D, that it only encourages power gamers in their endless quest to kick the most ass. Others say that they look forward to watching their characters challenge the most powerful denizens of their campaign world.

Personally, I have to confess to a mixed reaction to high-level play in general. As a player, I dig the idea of the epic barbarian who leaps over redwoods or the epic bard who can convince two warring nations that they're actually bosom comrades. I get chills imagining the epic rogue who creeps into a powerful foe's lair just to count coup.

But as a DM, epic play terrified me when I first sat down and considered its potential. How could I come up with a challenge for such powerful characters? How do I justify the presence of powerful, evil organizations that haven't already destroyed or enslaved the world?

Solutions to these obstacles came easier than I expected. The first is this: Start thinking about epic early. In fact, the earlier you start plotting for higher level campaigning, the easier the transition. When your PCs are low level, present them with some adventure hooks that are obviously beyond their level. They'll realize right away that some bad guys are too much for them to handle.

In a lunchtime *Oriental Adventures* campaign that DRAGON Editor Matt Sernett runs, that's exactly what he did. The first few hooks he dropped in our laps as 1st-level characters involved exploring the forbidden stronghold of an ancient empress and a journey to free a god from his prison. We players took one look at each other and knew we'd be in over our heads in either case, but all the while, we were thinking, "Someday . . ."

If you don't want to drop hooks like this—in fear, perhaps, that your low-level PCs might actually pursue them—consider this: Are the PCs the only adventurers in your campaign world? Probably not. Are other groups all do-gooder heroes? Again, probably not. So there's another method of introducing epic play: Assume it's a part of the world that's always been there. Just as the PCs go on their adventures and grow in power, so too do the bad guys. Any road the PCs walk has been traveled by other adventurers—good and evil—before. There's always someone bigger, badder, and meaner just around the corner.

In my home campaign, this is the approach I opted for early on. I decided the world was too big a place for the PCs to keep track of, and plenty of villains they hadn't met yet were out setting vile plots in motion and building their powerbase, waiting for the opportunity to stake a claim in the Epic Antagonist Hall of Fame.

Finally, use the approach of epic levels to introduce a world-altering event into your game that allows access to epic powers. This change can be as disruptive as you like—akin to a massive radiation leak—or it can be a subtle shift—by introducing the power sparingly via an artifact like the Shadar Pool (from "The Razing of Redshore" in issue #92). Either way, it's a good opportunity to alter the balance of a campaign setting and maybe even reinvent your game.

No matter which approach you use—one of these or another entirely—consider that there is a hierarchy of power in any setting. The "Monsters Ranked by Challenge Ratings" chart on page 223–224 in the *Monster Manual* really puts things in perspective.

We'd love to hear how you plan on working epic adventures into your campaign. Or if you're cutting your campaign short before reaching levels 21 plus, why you made that decision. Drop us a line at **dungeon@wizards.com** and share your epic experiences.

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LETTERS

Tell us what you think of this issue's adventures. Write to: Letters, *Dungeon Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055 or send an email to dungeon@wizards.com.

BEST OF THE BEST

I just started getting into the Dungeons and Dragons roleplaying game, and I really enjoy it. I asked a few friends what was the best source for D&D information, and they suggested your publication. I want to say I have never been happier. Anything and everything that I want to know about D&D is found right here. Keep up the good work. This truly has become a D&D adventure!

Dee Soyo
Manchester, NH

WHALE OF AN ADVENTURE

The "Razing of Redshore" was an *awesome* adventure. I've read through it a couple times, and I can't wait to put my players through its paces. The city of Redshore fits nicely into my campaign world. (In fact if you have any more seafaring or coastal city adventures laying around, you could print them in future issues of *Dungeon Magazine* and make me a happy camper. Hint, hint.) Even if those adventures are set into an existing campaign world like Greyhawk or the Forgotten Realms, a little tweaking can remedy that and make the adventure ready to go for a DM's campaign world. (I just thought I'd mention that painfully obvious point, because you folks at *Dungeon* and *Dragon* magazines seem to get a lot of flack from some of your readers about too much campaign specific material.) Maybe if a reader (who has been a player and DM for nearly a dozen years) says it those others will get the idea and quit complaining.

Dean Siemsen
Via Email

Some readers do seem to take offense at campaign specific material. Heck, we were surprised at the number of people who read the Dragon d20 Annual and said they couldn't use anything in it because it was all d20 material and not D&D material. We're glad that with each issue that passes, more folks seem to understand that d20 is D&D. Our heads were getting sore from repeatedly bashing them into our cubicle walls.

PERFECT FIT

I recently returned to the RPG world following a ten-year hiatus. It's been a swift and painfree learning curve—assisted not only by the simplified rules of the new edition but also by subscriptions to both *Dungeon* and *Dragon Magazines*.

My two favorite settings are the Forgotten Realms and Planescape campaigns, which can be integrated in relatively painless fashion. Now, I may just have to add Spelljammer. Rather, now I may just have to integrate Spelljammer!

You see, my current campaign is eventually going to end up with the players being evicted from the Prime Material Plane by a group of faerst (psionic savants) living in Faerûn who seek domination of Faerûn in order to protect it from illithids. (See *Dragon* Issue #281 for a description in the faerst.) Ultimately, the PCs' task will be to return to Faerûn to stop the take-over, but in the meantime, I've looked for various planar adventures to keep them busy on their mission. I've planned for visits to the Blood War, the Astral Plane, Sigil, and Mechanus. But I wanted more. When I saw Spelljammer, I saw a perfect additional plane to subject the players to. It fits so well with the standard D&D setting that I had to wonder whether this was part of the planning. Regardless, thank you!

Oh, and thanks also for "Interlopers of Ruun-khazai." It's nice to see that Planescape isn't truly dead. Still, I'd love to see more. Keep up the good work!

Aaron C. Frankland
Gallup, NM

IT'S DEAD, JIM

I have been a subscriber of *Dungeon* and *Dragon Magazines* for a good number of years, and I always find useful information in every issue. I know that the conversion from 2nd to 3rd edition has come with its bumps and grinds, but why don't we let dead campaign worlds be dead? The campaign world that I am referring to in particular is Spelljammer. I am in the military and in eight or nine years of

gaming, with 40–50 different DMs and PCs, no one that I know has ever liked or enjoyed SPELLJAMMER. I am sorry to say that, but it is the truth. And to the creators of SPELLJAMMER I would like to say, "I applaud your efforts but I think that your focus should eventually shift."

R.J. McKenney
Via Email

RUN-DOWN

I decided to wait a couple of issues before I commented on the new combined format. Why? Because it was obvious that the new *POLYHEDRON* was still a diamond in the rough, with Erik still cutting it. Really, I wanted to give the poor guy a break. So here we go, *POLYHEDRON* first:

You're putting more content in each successive issue. Good, keep that up for a few more issues.

I'd like to see a spotlight on some independent publishers. Not all of them (ugh—some of them have a harder time spelling "quality" control than I do), but I would like to see some stuff on Necromancer Games (Clark Peterson and Bill Webb make great stuff.)

I would like to see follow-up articles to previously published d20 games like the one for *Shadow Chasers* on page 5.

Less "Bolt and Quiver." One or two strips is fine, five is too much.

I just joined the RPGA, but I would still say this even if hadn't, RPGA articles are good. Keep them coming.

(I'll comment on *SPELLJAMMER: Shadow of the Spider Moon* once I've fully read it.)

DUNGEON: The new format is good. I preferred the old format until I read that you can get 100 more words on a page with it! Now, it doesn't seem so bad anymore.

Four adventures (not "Critical Threats") is the fewest number of adventures I want to see in the magazine.

I like "Critical Threats," keep them coming.

I just ran "Kambranex's Machinations" for my group. I run a beer and pizza kind of game, without the beer, and things had been getting serious, so I threw my "no published adventures" rule out the window and found, to my surprise, that the right adventure for them was in the then-current issue of *DUNGEON*! They loved it and thought it was a nice chance of pace. The also thought I ran it well. Still, I know who the real credit goes to. Robert Lee's other adventure for *DUNGEON* is also great. I'd run it, if it was appropriate for my players right now.

Next issue has an adventure for 21st level adventures! Wow, is this a first for *DUNGEON*?

One last thing, tell Robert Lee and Christopher West that their cartography is excellent. The cartographers in *DUNGEON* don't get enough praise from the readers.

If any of the adventures seem exceptionally good or bad, I'll email you again and let you know.

Stephen Nicholson
Via Email

So you know, the fewest number of adventures we plan on ever printing is four. And yes, as far as I know, this issue's 21st-level adventure, "The Storm Lord's Keep," is a first for both DUNGEON and the new edition of D&D.

BETTER AND BETTER

I am writing to commend you on the ever improving quality of your magazine. It just keeps getting better and better! In previous years, I had never found *DUNGEON* of great interest—I always thought I could do a better job as a DM crafting my own adventures. But now, I have had to swallow my words. The quality of the magazine is outstanding, the adventures are excellent, the articles top notch, and now I'm getting two magazines for the price of one—I love it!

I just received issue #91, and again, awesome job. From the first page of Chris Thomasson's editorial, I was again struck by the first class level of work. In the editorial alone, I immediately started to develop my own DMing skills in trying to think of how to get my players to better express their character's agenda. I am always trying to find ways to deepen the roleplaying of my players in their different character personas. "Challenge of Champions IV" was excellent—again, a chance for me to get my players to roleplay and get through an adventure together. I can't wait to use "Kambranex's Machinations" in play. The half-machine template is wonderful—in that devious, evil, push the characters into horrible transformations by the DM sort of way (I was a big fan of the sheen articles in Dragon and the manikin kit). The new "Critical Threats" feature is also really top notch.

I have to say that, for myself, I don't like the new format of the magazine being patterned after the core rulebooks. I find it distracting for some reason. This is an aesthetic complaint and should not be counted too heavily against the excellence of the magazine. If *DUNGEON* continues to achieve such (dare I say it) greatness, I will read it even if you print it on toilet paper!

I also have a request. I don't have Internet access, so I would like to know how to get a copy of the Writer's Guidelines and Standard Disclosure Form.

Marvin Johnson
Lancaster, CA

Praising the editorial is a sure-fire way to get your letter

printed, Marvin.

We don't think we'll need to resort to toilet paper any time soon (although we hope our publisher doesn't get any ideas from your letter). Seriously, I couldn't have asked for a better letter to introduce the newly revised Dungeon *Writer's Guidelines, which we've reprinted in this issue (and only this issue). Check them out on page 102. We know they look long. Just remember that a great deal of the information in the guidelines is style oriented, which you don't have to worry about for an adventure proposal. The new guidelines should also be available online shortly, if they're not there already.*

COOL CONTINUITY

With all the changes that have been made in the D&D game over the years, and in the Dungeon and Dragon magazines as well, it was a pleasant surprise to see the nod back to us older players in Dungeon #92. After reading "Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" and seeing "the broken shards of Fedifensor" as part of the treasure of the githyanki Karluth, I ventured down to the furthest reaches of my early magazine collection to find the original "Fedifensor" adventure that was presented in Dragon #67. (For those without the Dragon Magazine Archive CD-ROM now, that was November of 1982!) The fabled sword returns after 20 years in real life! How many other games can claim such continuity? The adventure by David Noonan shows that the races of Gith are tougher now than ever, there are hooks for further adventure (including the reassembly of the sword), and the presentation, layout and artwork show how much your magazine has progressed from those long-ago days. D&D remains fresh and alive in Third Edition, but has not forgotten its roots in 1st Edition. Thanks from a 'senior' player!

James Ambrose
Kansas City, MO

WITHOUT FOUNDATION

This is in response to the Polyhedron segment "d20 Supers Rogue's Gallery" (Polyhedron 150, p. 7) and specifically the mini-review presented for *The Foundation: A World in Black and White*. The review is riddled with information that is inaccurate. First, it claims that the game "(glorifies) rape as a method triggering super powers." While one character did indeed gain her abilities during a rape attempt, no such glorification is evident in the book itself. This origin is simply in keeping with the comic tradition of individuals unlocking their potential under duress. It is true that this aspect of the character's origin is glossed over briefly and perhaps your reviewer mistook that for glorification.

Secondly, the review mentions "information on superheroines' breast sizes alongside game statistics." Again this is inaccurate. Actually, there is no such information anywhere within the game.

Lastly, the reviewer mentions the art is "by people you've never heard of and probably won't hear from again." While I cannot speak for the validity of this statement for others I had heard of Michael Nunn (*UNSanctioned* and *Peacekeepers Illustrated*) who did provide some artwork. As for the prognostication that none of the artists will work in the game field again I feel that someone unable to get their information accurate about currently released products should refrain from making assumptions about the future. Regardless of whether your reviewer liked *The Foundation*, he does owe the publishers, artists, and writers a sincere apology for presenting false and misleading information in a forum that reaches many gamers.

Joey Mammoliti
Via Email

Erik Responds: I welcome any of the Foundation's artists to prove us wrong by getting more work in the field. It was a cheap shot, especially since some of these guys look like they're just starting out. Good luck, guys.

As long as we're being pedantic, the fiction at the back of the book includes at least two attempted rapes of women who as a result gain super powers (Terry "Power Woman" Josephson and Kat "Firemane" Thomas, for you Foundation fans). There may be more—I wasn't willing to finish the fiction (a third of the book) to find out.

You're simply wrong about the breast sizes. Not only does the book include them, but it also includes measurements for waists and hips. Don't believe me? Better take it up with Power Woman (40D-28-36, p. 37) or Firemane (32B-24-33 or 36C-26-32, p. 40), both of whom are tough customers who know how to fight off a sexual predator. With powers!

VANITY

VANITY

BY J. BRADLEY SCHELL

ARTWORK BY RON SPENCER • CARTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG ZIPSE

Magic Items Monsters NPCs Objects Settlements Traps

"Vanity" is a D&D adventure for four characters of 5th level. It can be modified for characters of other sizes and levels with little difficulty. See the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar for details.

"Vanity" is a dungeon crawl set in the Barrier Peaks at the northwestern edge of the Duchy of Bissel, an otherwise wild and rough part of the country. If you are not using The Flaeness as the basis of your campaign, then this adventure can be set in any uncivilized mountainous region with a semi-regularly traveled road nearby.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

On a journey through this mountainous region, the party discovers and explores the crypt of Dorl Tavyani. In the outer rooms of the crypt, the PCs encounter a group of bugbears lead by their ogre chieftain, who is, in turn, led by his intelligent magic greatclub. The bugbear tribe has kidnapped a local elven maiden, and the PCs inadvertently have the opportunity to enable her escape.

Further into the strangely elaborate (for a group of bugbears) complex, the characters discover a secret chapel dedicated to the worship of someone named Dorl Tavyani. His crypt is guarded by a chimera. Hidden underneath the chapel is the burial chamber of Dorl Tavyani, where as a specter, he still guards his lifetime's accumulation of vainglorious monuments.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Slightly over two hundred years ago, Dorl Tavyani, a handsome and rich mercenary fighter and illusionist, created a mausoleum for himself on the edges of Bissel, the Duchy to which he had retired a few years before. Using only the finest materials, the most expensive craftsman, and the most renowned architects of Bissel, Dorl Tavyani built a strong, well-hidden crypt under a large chapel dedicated to the worship of himself.

Unwilling to let his beautiful curls lapse into the baldness of old age, Dorl Tavyani spent a fair portion of his life studying how the quasi-deities and demigods attained their positions of divinity. Dorl felt that if only he could gain the worship of a few people, then he too could become an immortal.

As old age approached, Dorl Tavyani spent much on longevity potions to keep death at bay, staying youthful and vigorous far longer than normal for a human. He used his dwindling resources to hire a crooked orator named Seer Ormiss to travel through the Duchy of Bissel proclaiming Dorl Tavyani's great deeds with sword and wand. The seer spoke of a hidden temple in the mountains where thousands flocked to see the miraculous face of Dorl Tavyani and experience his healing miracles and mystical blessings.

It didn't take long before many of the more desperate in Bissel journeyed with Seer Ormiss to Dorl's chapel. Dorl would hide in his burial chamber deep within the dungeon until the worshipers showed up, turn invisible, and then use his illusions and other magic to impress upon them his divinity. Suitably impressed, several of the worshippers went away and told others about their "mystical and holy" experiences. With the improved numbers came donations, and a dozen acolytes took up residence in the outer chambers of the complex.

All was going according to Dorl's plan until word of the "miracles" reached the hero-god Kelanen, The Prince of Swords (see *Living Greyhawk Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue #3 for details on Kelanen). Kelanen was jealous of Tavyani's sphere of influence and didn't appreciate

the "Sword Blessings" Dorl was performing (a *continual flame* spell cast on a parishioner's weapon). The Prince of Swords disguised himself as a religious pilgrim and journeyed to Dorl's tomb. When Dorl began his routine, Kelanen revealed himself in all his divine glory and challenged Dorl to a duel of swords. Dorl, secure in his own self-delusions of near divinity, accepted the challenge.

Kelanen humiliated Dorl, shattering his magical sword and leaving him a quivering hull of a man, begging for his life. From Dorl's own blood, Kelanen created a chimera and set it upon the other pilgrims as punishment for their transgressions, but saved a more horrible death for Dorl. The Hero-God sealed the still-living pretender in his own burial chamber, dispelling the effects of the magic that kept him young. Dorl aged over a hundred years in a matter of minutes, dying a horrible death. As he left, The Prince of Swords charged the chimera to guard the temple, slaying any who dared return.

The acolytes were among the first to be eaten by the chimera, as were several of the more devout pilgrims. Soon, the tomb became well-known as a deadly and accursed place, and travelers visited it no more. The tomb went unseen for many years, the religious fervor for Dorl quickly lost steam, and the whole episode was generally forgotten by the populace.

Now the temple is inhabited again. About three years ago, the Skullcreepers, a bandit band of bugbears lead by an intelligent magic greatclub called *Skullcreeper* (the weapon is indeed arrogant enough to name the tribe after itself) took over the outer rooms of the crypt. *Skullcreeper* is wielded by an ogre named Brainy Loosemuscles. *Skullcreeper* completely dominates Brainy and rules the group of bandits through him. The bugbears explored almost the entire temple, but after losing a couple of members to the chimera, limited their residence to the outer areas of the crypt. They've been fairly successful in their banditry, focusing on capturing and ransoming young elf maidens (this is the greatclub's idea—see the "*Skullcreeper*" sidebar).

FOR THE PLAYERS

The adventure can begin in a couple of ways. Consider one of the following potential, easy hooks:

• After hearing rumors of a group of bandits in the mountains near Pellak, the PCs are traveling through the mountains near Tavyani's crypt when they're ambushed by a group of four bugbears. The bugbears flee if half their number go down, heading back in the direction of the crypt. If all the bugbears are slain, the PCs still find an obvious trail leading back to the crypt.

• The PCs are traveling near Tavyani's crypt when they witness a group of bugbears attack a caravan on the road nearly a half mile ahead of them. They arrive in time to save the life of an elf named Enthinol Treestretch, who tells them that the bugbears took his daughter. The PCs can easily follow the bugbears back to the crypt.

• A reward of 500 gp is posted for the heads of group of bandits operating out of the mountains near Pellak. The bandits of have been engaging in kidnappings, and the local rulers have had enough.

If you want to appeal to the more heroic side of the characters, however, consider a more dramatic hook:

•While the PCs loiter about in the city of Pellak, the capital of Bissel, they notice a number of missing posters that depict a rough sketch of an elven maiden. The posters read:

"Missing! Ferrella Treestretch, an elf maiden stolen from the road between Thornward and Pellak. Reward! See Enthinol Treestretch in the Hollow Stump inn."

A successful Gather Information check (DC 20) reveals that a group of bandits that lairs in the mountains has been engaging in a kidnap and ransom racket for the past several years. They strike about once every few months, snatch a young, middle-class woman from her home, and exchange her a few weeks later for a ransom. No one seems particularly concerned. Pellak is a big city, and none of the girls has even been killed.

If the PCs seem interested, they'll head to the Hollow Stump. When they arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

> The first thing you notice about the Hollow Stump is that it's quiet, and the second is that the clientele is almost exclusively elven. As you enter, a tall, slim elf, wearing rough, home-spun clothes of green and white stands from a table near the door. He looks you up and down and says, "Are you here to go after those bastards who took my daughter?"

If the PCs answer in the affirmative, the elf, Enthinol Treestretch, pulls out another of the posters and taps the picture with a slender finger.

> "She was snatched from me," he says. "I just couldn't stop them. She likes to wander the hills between here and Thornward, looking for flowers and herbs. It was almost like the brutes knew where she would be—like they'd been watching her. I couldn't stop them myself. I was too far away when I heard her scream, and by the time I arrived, all that remained was her basket, which held a ransom note. They want 1,000 gold for her return, but I

don't have that kind of money!

"The Knights of the Watch refuse to help me. Can you get my little girl back?"

The elf is Enthinol Treestretch (Com1, hp 4), a simple resident of the Bramblewood Forest. He has journeyed down to Pellak to seek help in recovering her. He doesn't know that the kidnappers were bugbears, only that they were larger than average humans.

The ransom note, which he'll show the PCs if they're interested, reads:

"1,000 gold to get pretty Girl. Follow Trail from killing place, and leave money at door. We bring Girl back then."

Enthinol is quite poor and can't afford to pay the ransom. The elves of Bramblewood have extended a tentative offer to help, but they're still deliberating the issue and don't seem inclined to speed their debate up. Rather than wait for them, Enthinol has taken matters into his own hands. He can offer only a 25 gp reward, plus the satisfaction of doing good to those who would aid him This is not enough for the Knights of the Watch, who are too busy guarding the borders to help for such a pittance. If the PCs offer to assist him, Enthinol happily journeys with the PCs to the area north of Pellak where his daughter was taken—the "killing place" the note refers to. As an additional incentive, Enthinol mentions to the PCs that the government of Pellak has offered a reward of 500 gp for the head of the bandit leader.

An uneventful three day trip takes the characters to the site of the abduction. There, Enthinol tells them he'll wait for a week. If the PCs don't return, he says he'll head back to Pellak to try and recruit someone else to help get his daughter back.

If the party investigates the site where the maiden was captured, a successful Search or Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) reveals a trail that leads them to the crypt of Dorl Tavyani. Secure in their strength, Brainy Loosemuscles' bandits left a clear trail that is easy for any woodsman to follow, even several days after the maiden was captured (Wilderness Lore DC 10).

The path leads west and north from the road to the source of the Realstream River at the edges of the Barrier Peaks, south of the Bramblewood Forest. Realstream River begins with several feeder streams that flow off an ancient mountain called Proudprow. The entrance to Dorl Tavyani's crypt is near the base of the eastern face of Proudprow. It is a day's travel from the site of the attack to the mountain.

THE CRYPT OF DORL TAVYANI

The crypt has several common features:

Walls, Floors, and Ceilings: Inside, they are constructed of thick reinforced masonry.

Walls, Floors, and Ceilings: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 180; AC 3; Break DC 35; Climb DC 15.

Doors: Unless otherwise specified, the doors in the temple are good wooden doors.

Wooden Door: 3 inches thick; hardness 5; hp 30; AC 5; Break DC 18.

1. GUARDED ENTRANCE

The trail of the kidnappers leads up the mountainside to this small cave, which quickly ends in a pair of iron doors. The ceiling is about 12 feet high and covered with soot and crude chalk drawings of a stick figure hunting great mastodons with what appears to be a green-bladed sword with a golden hilt. The floor is smooth and unbroken stone, ending suddenly in a 10-foot by 10-foot pit directly in front of the doors, some 20 feet deep.

Anyone looking in the pit sees a large humanoid skeleton at the bottom, impaled on 3-foot-long iron spikes. The skeleton is that of a bugbear, left to rot by

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Vanity" is designed for 5th-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

3rd- to 4th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following additional changes:

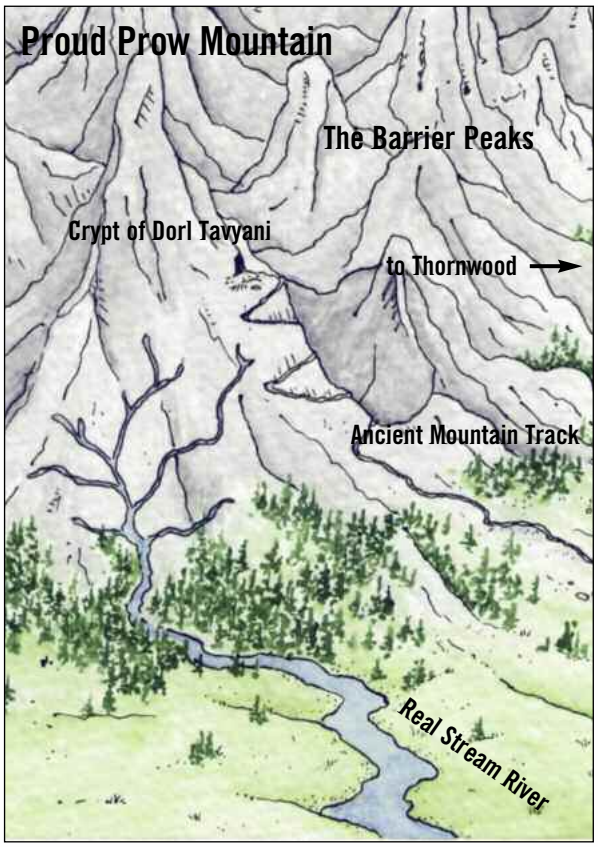
- Give Brainy enough fighter levels to equal the party's level. Reduce the number of bugbears by one third.
- Instead of a spectre, make Dorl Tavyani an advanced wight with 6 HD.

6th- to 7th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following additional changes:

- Make Brainy a 2nd-level barbarian hill giant.
- Add three more bugbears to the guard room (area **2**).
- Advance the chimera by 4 HD.
- Make Dorl Tavyani a 2nd-level illusionist.

8th- to 9th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following additional changes:

- Make Brainy a 2nd-level barbarian/2nd-level fighter hill giant.
- Make each bugbear a 1st-level fighter/1st-level rogue.
- Make the chimera 16–17 HD total. Note that this increases its size to Huge.
- Make Dorl Tavyani a 3rd-level illusionist/1st-level fighter.



his companions. Anyone who would open the door has to *fly, levitate,* or Climb (DC 15) to get to the door. The Skullcreepers keep a broad ladder in the guard chamber (area **2**), that they use to cross the pit. Normally, raiding parties just make a lot of noise to get the doorguard to open the door and set the ladder. As a result, if the bugbears hear the PCs (Listen DC 15, unless the PCs take the precaution of being silent), they open the door for 1 round to look out and see what's happening, ladder at the ready. See area **2** for details.

There used to be a sophisticated lock on the doors connected to the floor trap, but it was smashed open. When the trap was working, if the doors were opened without first pulling on the concealed knob to the right of the door, the entire floor swung open to reveal a 20-foot-deep spiked pit trap. However, the bugbears destroyed this trap after losing a member to it. It can be repaired with a successful Disable Device check (DC 20).

Padlock Spiked Pit Trap (20 ft. deep): CR 1; no attack roll necessary (2d6), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 25).

The doors are crudely locked now. None of the bugbears had the skill necessary to fix the original lock.

Iron Doors: 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 15.

2. GUARD CHAMBER (EL 5)

This 20-foot by 20-foot chamber is simply furnished. A pair of heavy benches surrounds an ancient, war-beaten table in the north wall and torches flicker along the walls. The ceiling arches overhead, creating a barrel-like effect some 20 feet high at its apex.

The room has several exits: a pair of 15-foot-high double doors on the east wall, a smaller single door to the west, and the large iron doors to the south that lead outside. A heavy bell hangs from the ceiling near the main entrance.

A large, 3-foot-wide, 15-foot-long ladder rests against the wall near the door through which you just entered.

Etched on the northern wall are the faint signs of some ancient paint; only faint, broad streaks of color are visible due to the passage of time.

None of the doors are locked, but the iron doors are an anomaly for the temple.

Creatures: There are always three bugbears in this room. This chamber initially served as the welcome chambers for pilgrims who came to worship Dorl Tavyani. Its great wall murals depicted Dorl's many great battles and adventurous deeds, but the paint has long since faded. The ladder is used by the bugbears to cross the pit in area **1**.

Bugbears (3): hp 15, 13, 17; *Monster Manual* 27. *Note:* These bugbears carry heavy crossbows instead of javelins, which deal 1d10 points of damage with a crit range of 19–20.

Tactics: The bugbear guards are alert for trouble if they hear the PCs, but open the door for 1 round to see what's going on if they hear the characters poking around outside. If they see the PCs, they ring the bell near the southern doors, alerting the rest of the brigands in the complex. If they win initiative, the bugbears close the door, flip over and hide behind the table, and set their heavy crossbows. This gives them three-quarters cover. They then ready actions to shoot the first intruder through the door.

If the PCs gain the door after the bugbears have set up the table, the guards pick up the table and bull rush the lead PC, attempting to knock him backward into the pit in area **1**. Using the table as a ram gives a bugbears a +4 circumstance bonus on its opposed bull rush check.

Ten rounds after the bell is rung, Brainy Loosemuscles and five more bugbears arrive from area **5**. If the PCs still haven't broken through the door, three bugbears join the guards behind the table, while the rest take one-quarter cover by standing behind the crouched bandits behind the table. None of the

bugbears reload their crossbows once fired, instead leaping into melee with their morningstars and attempting bull rush attacks to push the PCs into the pit in area **1** if they can.

Brainy Loosemuscles watches from the back, waiting for the opportunity to use the *dimension door* ability of *Skullcreeper* to appear behind the party. Brainy attacks spellcasters first, but he tries to flee (at *Skullcreeper's* urging) back to area **5** if he is dropped below 15 hit points.

The bugbears rely on the pit to guard them. As a result, PCs who make it through the door without alerting the guards on the other side catch the bugbears completely off guard. All three close to melee immediately, and no one bothers to ring the alarm bell for the first 3 rounds of combat. At that point, or if only one bugbear remains standing (whichever comes first) a guard makes a last effort to reach the bell and sound the alarm.

Development: If the fight in the guard chamber lasts more than 5 rounds, an off-duty bugbear guard in area 3 hears the commotion and pokes his head into the room to see what's happening (he's expecting to see a pair of guards wrestling to pass the time). When he sees the PCs, he attempts to dash to the alarm bell and ring it.

. **Treasure:** In addition to their equipment, each bugbear carries 25 gold pieces.

3. GUARD BARRACKS (EL VARIABLE)

This 15-foot by 20-foot room has a ceiling some 15 feet high. A wooden door is on the eastern wall. Six cots of indeterminate nature are scattered about the room. Bits of bones, broken weapons, and other debris lies scattered about the floor. The walls are carved from natural gray stone.

This is the barracks for the six bugbears who guard the front door (they guard in two 12-hour shifts of three). When the bugbears go off duty, they get to go back to the main barracks but are required to sleep here.

Creature (EL 2): During the day, there is a 50% chance that one bugbear guard is sleeping here. Note that only the weakest (lowest hit point) bugbears get stuck with guard duty. The others prefer to party and torment the prisoners in area **5**.

Bugbear: hp 11; *Monster Manual* 27. *Note:* This bugbear carries a heavy crossbow instead of a javelin, which deals 1d10 points of damage with a crit range of 19–20.

Tactics: If the PCs encounter a sleeping guard here, he only wakes up when the PCs enter the chamber. Consequently, he's prone and his morningstar lies on the floor next to his pallet. It takes him a full round to get up and pick up his weapon.

Treasure: Like the other guards, this one carries 25 gp in a belt pouch.

4. BRAINY LOOSEMUSCLES' QUARTERS

Based on the quality of the paint job on the walls, this room must have once been quite nicely appointed. The 30-foot-high ceiling is finely arched, with two granite tresses holding the entire room together.

Many painted frescos adorn the walls, all depicting a tall, golden-haired human wielding a long sword. Once there might have been other details, but they have been obscured by thick finger marks the size of tree limbs and crushing blows the size of a bull's head.

A large bed of used linens and ugly hides lies in the southeast corner, while a heavy wardrobe fills up an alcove to the north. A pair of double doors opens on the western wall.

There might have once been a large closet built in to the northeast corner of this room, but it has had several holes smashed into it (from Brainy taking practice swings with *Skullcreeper*). The closet's destruction leaves the entire room open, but hooks for missing clothing that line the walls of the closet indicate its use.

This was the chief acolyte's chamber when pilgrims used to travel here. It was once quite nice, with silk upholstered couches, fine bedding on a goose-down mattress, and a large closet full of religious robes and other paraphernalia. Most of it was left behind when the crypt was abandoned, but what remained has since been ruined by the passage of time and the ogre Brainy Loosemuscles, who has taken this chamber as his own.

The bandit chief has drawn together all the remains of the bedding and robes in a heap that he is using as a nest, and he moved the wardrobe over to the corner to hide his treasure. A successful Strength check (DC 21) is required to lift a corner and look beneath the wardrobe. If the bedding is searched, the PCs find several small cloth patches depicting a golden-hilted sword with a green blade on a white background. This is Dorl Tavyani's "holy symbol."

There used to be many pictures of Dorl Tavyani here, but they were all destroyed by Brainy, who didn't like the funny little man staring at him all the time. The effort did nothing more than destroy a perfectly good closet, unfortunately.

Development: It's very unlikely the PCs encounter Brainy here (10% chance), assuming he didn't show up at the guard room with reinforcements. He spends

most of his time in the the main meeting hall (area **5**).

Treasure: Hidden under the wardrobe is a *+1 large steel shield of light fortification*, two *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *potion of gaseous form*, and 750 gp (some of the ransom money from former kidnap victims).

5. MAIN MEETING HALL (EL 9)

This enormous cavern was probably once used as storage, but it now serves as a single barracks, feast hall, and living quarters. The ceiling soars some 60 feet into the air and is blackened with smoke and ash. Two fire pits in the eastern portion of the chamber provide most of the illumination in the room. Old bones, ancient armor, broken furniture, and other detritus are scattered about.

A boulder, roughly 20 feet across and some 15 feet high, lies in the center of the chamber. On the west side of the great stone mound are several piles of dirty bedding, the stench of which is nearly overpowering.

A small wooden door of ornate design is in the east wall.

These are the main barracks for the bugbears, and where they spend the majority of their time. This was once the main pilgrims' sleeping and preparation chamber, and much of the trash that remains scattered about the cavern is left over from when the crypt was abandoned.

There are a total of twelve piles of bedding in the western portion of the chamber, six of which are currently unused (the results of attrition in the banditry business.) A small midden has been dug against the west wall. Note that there is a 50% chance one of the nine bugbears is actually sleeping in area **3**.

Creatures: If the PCs successfully sneak into the crypt without raising the alarm, then nine bugbears and Brainy can be found cavorting here, waiting for *Skullcreeper* to plan out their next abduction. If the alarm was raised, five bugbears wait here. Brainy might also be present in such a circumstance if he wasn't killed in area **2**.

Brainy Loosemuscles, Male Ogre Ftr5: CR 7; Large Giant (10 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 4d8+8 plus 5d10+10; hp 70; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18;

SKULLCREEPER

Skullcreeper is an evil intelligent greatclub and the real leader of the bandit band. Its ego completely dominates Brainy Loosemuscles, and it uses him to advance its cause of self-aggrandizement.

The club has a checkered history of serving the great barbarian kings of the north, most recently serving Ulich Spinecracker. Ulich, following the urgings of *Skullcreeper,* was a pirate and raider against the soft "weaklings of the south." His success led to a greatly expanded kingdom, bringing several other tribes under his sway. The same success was ultimately his downfall, for Ulich attracted the attention of the civilized nations to the south. Eventually, Ulich and his kingdom were ended in a battle against the Knights of the Watch. A great Knight of the Watch, a paladin named Chalife Violeteyes, single-handedly slew Ulich and captured *Skullcreeper*. He intended to destroy the weapon once he learned of its nature, but he was ambushed and slain by hill giants on the way to consult a sage regarding the best way to destroy the weapon. From there, the weapon found its way into the hands of Brainy Loosemuscles and has been plotting to regain the greatness it found with Ulich ever since.

Unfortunately, the Knights of the Watch are quite active in this area, and so the club is extremely careful not to reveal its presence. It has been using the Skullcreepers to slowly collect enough gold to buy a strong mercenary force of humanoids that can face up to the Watch and establish a kingdom led by *Skullcreeper's* chosen "pet," but that goal is still some time away from being fulfilled.

Description: *Skullcreeper* is a storm-touched brand of oak, bound with brass and iron. Attached at the end of the greatclub is a demonic-shaped skull cast in iron, with eyes that glow red when in combat. When the club speaks, its voice comes from the skull. Strange arcane runes constantly crawl across the brass and iron, and the air around the club shimmers when it is swung.

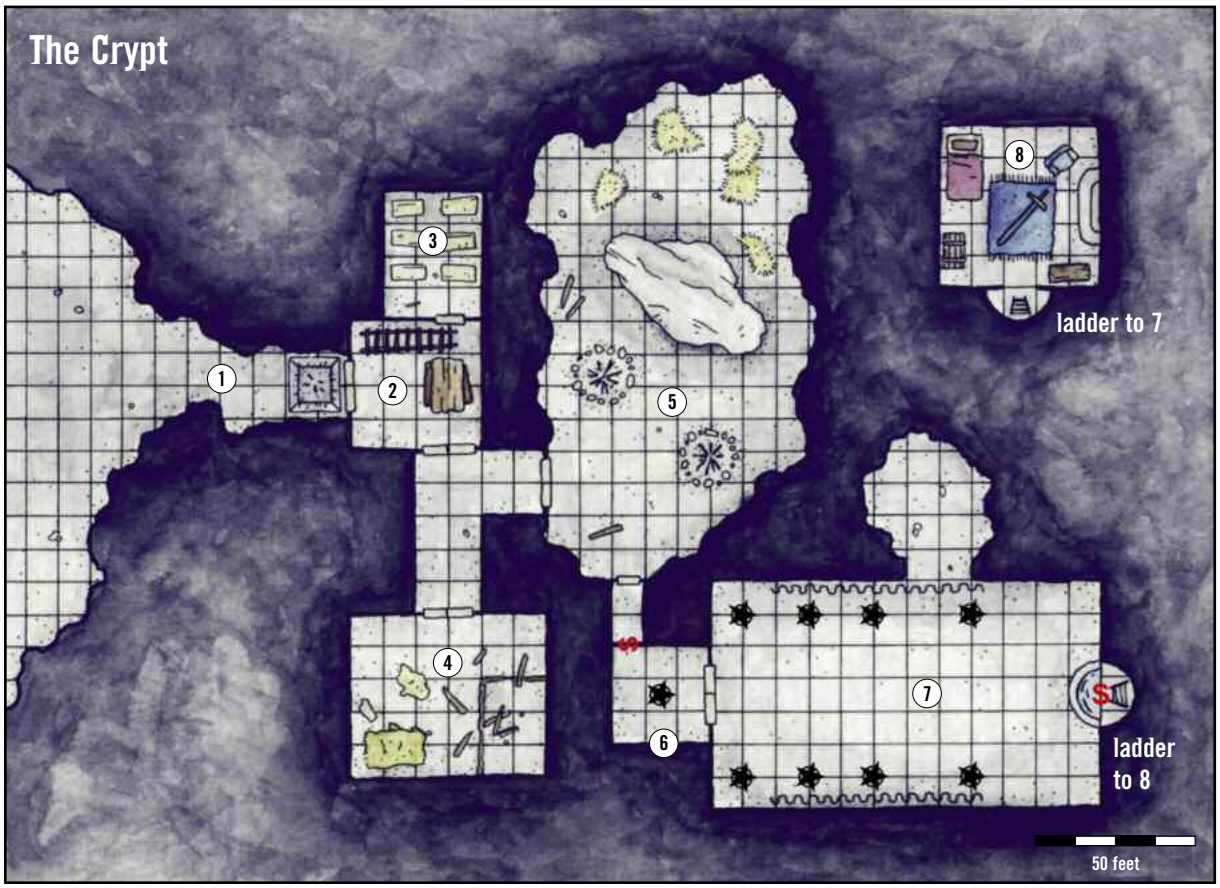
Skullcreeper is a *+2 greatclub*. It has an Intelligence of 19, a Wisdom of 15, a Charisma of 17, and an Ego of 21. Its alignment is NE, it speaks Common and Goblin, and it can communicate telepathically with its wielder.

Primary Abilities: *Skullcreeper's* wielder can *find traps* at will, gains 10 ranks in the Sense Motive skill, and can *detect magic* at will.

Extraordinary Ability: *Skullcreeper's* wielder can *dimension door* 2/day.

Special Purpose: *Skullcreeper's* special purpose is to slay humans. When the wielder is in pursuit of that power (fighting humans), human opponents struck by *Skullcreeper* are affected by a *inflict moderate wounds* spell that deals 2d8+3 points of damage. A successful Will save (DC 13) negates half this damage (but not normal damage caused by the club's blow).

Skullcreeper attempts to dominate anyone who picks it up and doesn't agree with the greatclub's agenda. A successful Will save (DC 21) allows the wielder to remain in control; otherwise, *Skullcreeper* establishes dominance. A save must be made each day if the wielder wishes to regain self-control. *Skullcreeper* prefers weak-willed, musclebound wielders (they're easier to control) and tries to force its wielder to find such a victim if its bearer isn't such an individual already. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* page 230 for more information on what an intelligent item can do against reticent PCs.



Atk +13 melee (1d10+9 plus 2d8+3—humans only, *Skullcreeper*) or +6 ranged (1d6+5, large rock); Reach 10 ft.; SA *Skullcreeper* (see the sidebar); AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +3; *Feats:* Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Weapon Specialization (greatclub), Sunder.

Brainy Loosemuscles is an enormous, dark yellow-skinned ogre, with 6-inch incisors and bushy hair. He wears a thick suit of chainmail with a wyvern skull for a helm and a choker collar made of human skulls. He never lets go of *Skullcreeper,* stuffing it into his belt whenever he needs to use two hands. If he is presented with an intellectual quandary (and with his intellect, there are plenty), he will stop and stare into his club for 1 round, taking direction as to what to do.

Tactics: Brainy uses the power of *Skullcreeper* to great effect. Using his 10-foot reach, he stays behind his bugbear troops and crushes opponents in front of them without ever endangering himself (a *Skullcreeper* innovation—before, Brainy always led the charge). If the PCs have spellcasters who stay in the back, Brainy uses *dimension door* to appear behind them. Note that because of *Skullcreeper's* purpose (to slay humans), Brainy always tries to attack humans before other targets, even if doing so is not necessarily advantageous. If he can't reach someone, he throws a rock, but this is always his last choice of combat options.

Bugbears (9): hp 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27; *Monster Manual* 27. *Note:* These bugbears carry heavy crossbows instead of javelins, which deal 1d10 points of damage with a crit range of 19–20/×2.

Tactics: The bandits are caught by surprise by a group that hasn't alerted the bandits to their presence yet, but after 1 round, the bugbears fall into an efficient combat formation and close to melee.

Development: The door to the east has been converted into a small holding cell. Inside waits Ferrella Treestretch (female elven Com1, hp 4—currently 2), who is bound and gagged. Whether the PCs came here seeking her or not, they have a chance to prove their valor by rescuing a true damsel in distress.

Ferrella is thrilled to be rescued, but she doesn't know anything about the area beyond what the PCs have already learned.

At the end of the cell is a stone wall with a carving of a handsome male human wielding a longsword with a golden hilt and green blade. Its details are well-covered in dust and muck, although a successful Spot check (DC 14) reveals several marks where the blade might have been handled. The bas relief has been com-

pleted with such skill that there seems to be a sense of awareness about it, for the eyes seem to follow all who move before it.

Pulling the longsword by the blade causes the portal to swing open, revealing the room beyond. It's not a highly concealed secret door and can be found with the most rudimentary Search (DC 12).

Treasure: Brainy carries some of his treasure with him in a large sack: 8 rocks, 800 gp, a small silver hand mirror (250 gp) wrapped in a silk banner (75 gp), and a *potion of invisibility* (6th level). He also wears a suit of ogre-sized chainmail. The nine bugbears carry a combined total of 325 gold pieces. Lost in one of the piles of bedding is a perfectly good silk cap (25 gp).

6. WELCOME CHAMBER

This white marble and alabaster room is surprisingly dust-free. The ceiling is vaulted and approximately 15 feet high. The walls are covered with seven beautifully-painted frescos of a tall, handsome human male, wielding a green-bladed longsword with a golden hilt and dressed in clothes of silver and blue. In each of the frescos, the man is depicted in various poses of martial activity, his sword at the ready. Each figure depicted builds upon the one before it, so that as each figure is viewed it creates an impression of fluid movement from one position to the next.

In the center of the room is a tall, extremely lifelike statue of the man depicted on the walls. Made of exotic woods, the statue seems to have withstood the test of time. A plaque rests at the base of the statue that reads "Dorl Tavyani, Sword Saint."

A pair of great bronze and gold doors, some 15 feet across, are centered on the northern wall.

This small chamber was used by the Dorl Tavyani cult as a preparation room before entering the main chapel. Dorl was fond of this statue, believing that it exactly captured his likeness, and he made sure everyone remarked upon his handsome visage.

The doors to the north are extremely heavy and require a Strength check (DC 22) to open. Note that there is a permanent *unseen servant* in this room to keep it dust free, so the entire room radiates magic.

Bronze and Iron Doors: hardness 10; hp 60; AC 5; Break DC 28.

7. TEMPLE OF DORL TAVYANI (EL 7)

This enormous chamber glows with its own pale, silvery light. The walls are lined with marble and ebony, interspersed with great ceiling to floor tapestries. The 60-foot by 35-foot chamber seems to be a massive monument to the man named Dorl Tavyani. Four marble statues line each of the east and west walls, each depicting the man in various triumphal forms of activity, from vanquishing his foes to showing mercy to the poor. In between each statue is a tall tapestry, further extolling Dorl Tavyani's virtues. Two particularly large and magnificent tapestries depicting great battle scenes, with Dorl Tavyani prominently featured in each, are displayed in the middle of the chamber on the east and west wall. To the east, he is vanquishing all manner of orcs and goblins, and to the west all sorts of dragons and reptilian beasts.

At the northern end of the chamber lies the only feature of the room that doesn't bear Dorl Tavyani's face. A beautiful silver and blue fountain trickles water slowly down out of a lion's mouth into a waiting pool below. A fresco above it shows Dorl Tavyani dipping his weapon into the fountain, then turning to vanquish several devils and demons.

This was where Dorl Tavyani put on his show for his worshipers. He emerged from the secret door hidden on the wall some 20 feet above the fountain, then used his magic to bring the frescos to life. Occasionally, he would appear for his followers, floating in the air with a golden halo about him to do battle with some beast from one of the walls (all illusions). Most of the time, however, he remained hidden from view with an *invisibility* spell.

The chimera that guards this temple is extremely fastidious (and hungry), and eats all the blood, guts, and equipment of its victims. It hides in the former storage area behind the tapestry on the west wall (Spot DC 25). However, it can't control the air temperature, and thanks to its frosty breath, the chapel is about 10 degrees cooler than the rest of the crypt. A successful Spot check (DC 12) reveals this change immediately.

As part of his preparation as a deity, Dorl enchanted the fountain to the north as a reward for his faithful followers. If a weapon is dipped into the water and allowed to soak for a full minute, the weapon gains the attributes of a +1 weapon for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction for the next 24 hours. In addition, the water of the fountain is always cool and refreshing to drink and can banish the effects of fatigue.

The secret door to the north of this room is located some 20 feet up, directly above the fountain on the northern wall. It requires a successful Search check (DC 20) to find, and opens by lifting a simple stone latch to the right of the door.

When the secret door is opened, a rush of ancient, musty air rushes out, fogging up the area around the door in a 20-foot radius and reducing visibility to 5 feet. The fog clears after 5 rounds.

Chimera, Guardian of the Fount of Dorl Tavyani: hp 88; *Monster Manual* 35.

Tactics: The chimera waits behind the great western tapestry, successfully hidden unless the party makes a Spot check opposed by the chimera's Hide check. The chimera receives a +10 circumstance bonus to this check due to the care with which it hides itself. When the PCs draw even with the tapestry, the chimera charges out and uses its breath weapon.

The chimera doesn't need to eat. Its physical needs are provided for by the magic of the god Kelanen. This doesn't stop its ravenous hunger, however, and if it slays something, it pauses for a full round to devour the unfortunate victim. It then attacks until either remaining intruders flee to area **5** (it doesn't pursue anyone beyond that) or it is slain.

Treasure: The tapestries are the only items of value in this room. They are worth 250 gp each to the right collector. The fountain cannot be detached from the wall without destroying the enchantment.

8. FINAL RESTING PLACE (EL 7)

The secret entrance to this room descends 120 feet down a rounded shaft set with iron rungs. The shaft empties out into a 25-foot by 25-foot, sumptuously appointed bedchamber and office. The room is bathed in shadows cast by a flickering fire in a fireplace set in the north wall. To its right is a well-crafted portrait of Dorl Tavyani. The ceiling of this chamber is dark and arched.

You can also see that resting on the mantle of the fireplace is a beautiful crystal statuette of Dorl Tavyani, poised for battle. A heavy, wing-backed chair, upholstered in thick blue velvet, sits adjacent to the fireplace. A small writing desk stands next to the upholstered chair, with a set of glass-covered book shelves mounted on the wall above the desk. The space between the desk and the red-brocaded quilt-covered bed to the south is covered with a shaggy blue carpet, woven with the design of a longsword with a golden hilt and green blade. Behind the bed is a large mirror that covers almost the entire southern wall. To one side of the bed is a heavy captain's trunk, its iron bands gleaming dully in the dim light. On the bed sits a small pile of dust.

This secret chamber is Dorl Tavyani's final resting place. It was where he spent most of his time between "shows," studying and writing down his thoughts for the "glory that is me." It was here that Kelanen cast Dorl when he defeated him in the temple above, and it was here that Dorl spent his last breath as his magical protection against aging was stripped from him. The small pile of dust on the bed is all that remains of his physical body.

Creature: Tavyani's spirit lives on in the form of a spectre. The opening of the secret door above alerts Dorl to the presence of strangers in his secret chamber, and he moves to hide in the shadows until he can see who it is. Relieved that it is not Kelanen returning, Dorl confuses the PCs with his worshipers and pilgrims, and emerges, calling them "his faithful" and saying that he knew "they would return to he whom they rightfully followed." If the PCs play along, he can be convinced to share his life's story. However, his undead hatred of all things living eventually overcomes him, and he launches an attack, especially if the party dwells too much on his defeat, or makes a disparaging comment about his appearance.

The fire in the fireplace is a *continual flame* spell that, after 300 years, is starting to die down to a smolder. On the shelves above the writing desk are three spellbooks (see **Treasure** below), a meandering treatise on swordplay, and a book of Dorl's self-serving musings—all written by himself. The desk contains the long dried remains of ink and quills and several sheets of parchment. In the captain's chest next to the bed is the shattered remains of Dorl's longsword, and several well-preserved outfits of blue and silver, each with Dorl's symbol upon them.

Dorl Tavyani, Spectre: hp 70; *Monster Manual* 169.

Dorl Tavyani appears almost exactly as he does in all of his statues: a tall, handsome, middle-aged blonde man, wearing blue and silver tunic and hose. He wears a scabbard but carries in his left hand the shattered remains of a longsword with a golden hilt. Only about 6 inches of the green blade remain. When he attacks, his visage melts instantaneously to a few tufts of hair and a ruined and scarred skull atop a skeletal body.

Tactics: Dorl takes complete advantage of his incorporeal state to attack and destroy the fighters of the party before turning his attention to spellcasters. If turned, he retreats to a corner of the room, hissing the entire time. He does not pursue the PCs outside of this room, for fear that Kelanen will return to finish the job.

Treasure: The three spellbooks in the glass cabinets contain the following spells: 0—*dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, prestidigitation, read magic;* 1st-level—*change self, color spray, hypnotism, Nystul's undetectable aura, obscuring mist, silent image;* 2nd level—*continual flame, invisibility, levitate, minor image, mirror image;* 3rd-level—*displacement, fly, gust of wind, lightning bolt, major image;* 4th level—*improved invisibility, minor creation, rainbow pattern, shadow conjuration;* 5th level—*permanency, persistent image, shadow evocation.*

The other books in the case are worth a total of 250 gp to the right collector. The painting of Dorl Tavyani is worth 50 gp. The statuette is worth 1,000 gp. The clothes in the chest are made of fine silk and can fetch 500 gp.

CONCLUSION

Unless the PCs are particularly lucky, Brainy Loosemuscles likely gets away. *Skullcreeper* compels him to flee to some other area using a second *dimension door* to continue to try to raise enough money to garner an army to carve out a small kingdom for itself. Of course, even if the PCs kill the ogre, there is still *Skullcreeper* to deal with. Destroying that evil weapon can be as difficult as you want it to be, perhaps requiring its own set of adventures.

If the party rescued Ferrella, Enthinol happily pays the 25 gp he promised. One month after the maidens' safe return the party also receives a pair of *boots of elvenkind* crafted by the elders of Bramblewood (they finally finished deliberating) and an ornately carved wooden cloak clasp worth 50 gp for each PC. These cloak clasps provide a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks when the PCs encounter any elves in the Bramblewood area.

If the PCs don't rescue the elf maiden, she is eventually ransomed by the elves of Bramblewood, and within a year, a small army of humanoids descends upon the borders of Bissel. They set up a small kingdom with Brainy Loosemuscles (and *Skullcreeper,* of course) on its throne, and could cause a great deal of trouble for the people of the duchy. Ω

Brad writes, "In keeping with the spirit of the adventure, I'd appreciate readers and players fanning the flames of my own vanity. Drop me a line at ***btsschellhouse@yahoo.com****."*

THE STATUE GALLERY

BY JOHNATHAN M. RICHARDS

ARTWORK BY ANTHONY WATERS · CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

Magic Items · Monsters · NPCs · Objects · Settlements · Traps

"The Statue Gallery" is a D&D Side Trek suitable for a party of four 9th-level PCs but can be modified for stronger or weaker groups as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. It takes place in a series of underground caverns that can be easily inserted into any ongoing campaign.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The medusa Korakaia dwells in a set of connected caverns. These caverns hold a collection of her victims, each frozen in stone as a result of her petrifying gaze attack. Korakaia's "statue gallery" serves as camouflage for her monstrous assistants: a mimic, a phasm, and a pair of vargouilles. The vargouilles and mimic pretend to be statues (or parts thereof), while the phasm currently wears the guise of a small stone. Korakaia wears a *hat of disguise* and a magic amulet that allows her to take on the shape of a statue herself.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

While traveling through the Underdark or during any underground cavern crawl, the PCs pass the entrance to Korakaia's cave complex. Upon entering, they deal with the medusa and her minions, and possibly free some of her petrified statues.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Korakaia's lair can be placed in almost any underground location. Feel free to insert the entrance tunnel (area 1) wherever you think these encounters would have the most impact.

1. ENTRANCE TUNNEL (EL 7)

As the PCs pass through this entrance tunnel, have them make a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a petrified rat among the jumble of fallen stones. Also, use their Spot roll as an opposed check against the phasm's Disguise check. The phasm appears as one of the many rocks piled in this area; it gets a +17 modifier to its Disguise check. After detecting the PCs via its tremorsense, it telepathically warns Korakaia and the others of their approach.

If the PCs detect the phasm, it remains unthreatening unless attacked. If questioned by the PCs, the phasm tells them that a medusa once laired in the cavern ahead but was slain years ago. This, of course, is a blatant lie; the phasm makes a Bluff roll (with a +15 modifier) against the PCs' Sense Motive check. If the PCs are suspicious, the phasm informs them they can see for themselves, as her skeleton lies in the cavern to the north.

Phasm: hp 97; *Monster Manual* 150.

2. THE STATUE GALLERY (EL 9)

The tunnel widens into an enormous cavern. You can see several statues scattered here and there along the sides of the cavern wall, and a toppled one in the middle. Further back, a ledge splits the cavern into two different heights, with a slope on the right side leading up to the upper level.

Describe each statue to the players as the PCs approach them (see "The Petrified Statues" at the end of the adventure). Korakaia and her minions do not move, appearing to be statues themselves. When the PCs reach the toppled "umber hulk statue," read or paraphrase the following:

The scene before you is irony at its very best: Apparently an unbalanced stone statue of an umber hulk toppled forward, crushing the individual standing immediately before it. Judging from the numerous snake skeletons clustered around the victim's skull, it would seem that a twist of fate took care of a medusa as she petrified her final victim. A bow juts out from underneath the statue; from what you can see of it, it looks intact.

Korakaia faked a medusa skeleton using the bones of a human victim and the skeletons of numerous snakes, carefully arranged to appear as the slain medusa's "hair." The bow under the fallen statue is **Treasure**, while the statue itself is a mimic. If the PCs attempt to interrogate the "medusa" skeleton via a *speak with dead* spell, it can tell the PCs that it was struck from behind and did not see its attacker; Korakaia and her allies will take this as an indicator that "the jig is up" and attack the PCs at this point.

Creatures: The umber hulk statue is actually a mimic. It waits for the PCs to attempt to lift it off the shortbow before attacking them, as then their hands will be empty of weapons. The other denizens wait for the PCs to approach the umber hulk statue and make the attempt to lift the statue before attacking as well.

Korakaia is currently under the effects of her magic amulet, and as such appears to be a petrified statue. However, she is fully aware of her surroundings and can see and hear the PCs as they enter her cavern. (See the "Amulet of Statues" sidebar for details on this item.) If the PCs attack her in statue form, she returns to flesh and engages them in combat.

Korakaia the Medusa: hp 34; *Monster Manual* 131. Note that because Korakaia has a *+1 composite longbow*, her ranged attack is made at +9/+4 for 1d8+1 points of damage.

Possessions: +1 composite longbow, hat of disguise, amulet of statues, potion of cure moderate wounds.

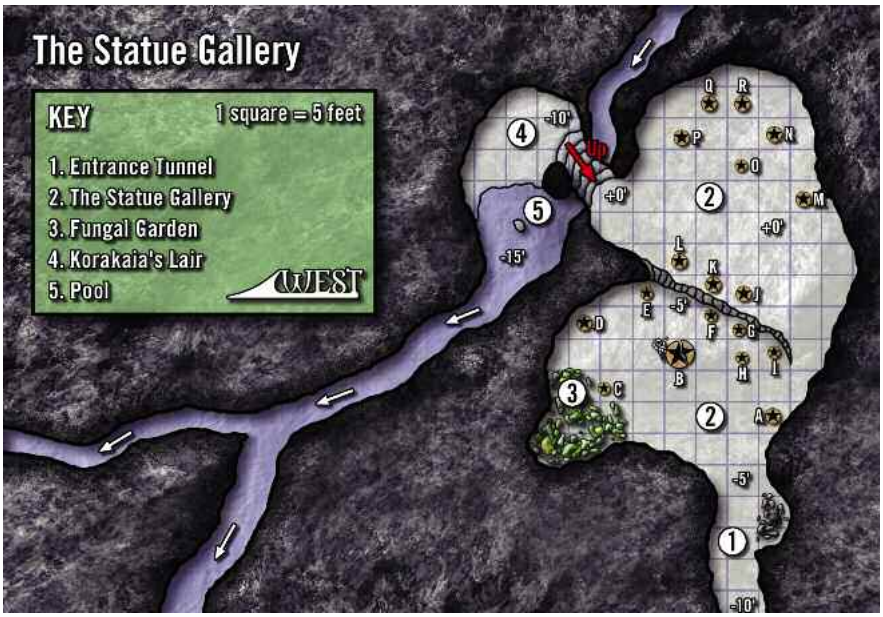
Mimic: hp 50; *Monster Manual* 135.

Advanced Vargouilles (2): CR 2; Small Outsider (Evil); HD 3d8+3; hp 16 each; Init +1; Spd fly 30 ft. (good); AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Atk +5 melee (1d4 and poison, bite); SA shriek, poison, kiss; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +6, Spot +6. *Feats:* Weapon Finesse (bite).

See the *Monster Manual*, page 182–183 for descriptions of the vargouilles' special attacks.

Tactics: As soon as the PCs attempt to hoist the statue off the skeleton to retrieve the bow, the mimic excretes adhesive from its pores, holding fast anyone currently in contact with its body and lashing out with a sticky pseudopod at one of the PCs.



At this point, the vargouilles fly off their perches (on statues Q and R) and use their shriek attacks on the PCs, following with a kiss on anyone paralyzed by the shrieks.

Korakaia deactivates her amulet and fires arrows at the PCs from higher ground, using the petrified human fighter with the tower shield as cover if necessary. Korakaia only deactivates her *hat of disguise* and uses her gaze attack if absolutely necessary, as she prefers to loot her victims' bodies of valuables, which is impossible once they turn to stone. The vargouilles seek to create others of their kind with their unholy kiss. If any PCs transform into vargouilles as a result, the remains of their cast-off bodies feed the monsters dwelling here. The vargouilles concentrate their attacks on any PCs adhered to the mimic, while Korakaia strikes those that are free. The phasm holds itself in reserve, only entering the fray if the PCs gain the upper hand.

If the phasm enters battle it changes form each round, using the most powerful attack of its adopted body before switching to a new form. It prefers ranged attacks over melee. See the sidebar for the phasm's favorite attack forms.

If the battle goes against her (if several of her monstrous companions are slain and the PCs resist her efforts at petrifying them with her gaze attack), Korakaia flees to the pool at area **5**, drinks the *potion of water breathing* kept there, and attempts to escape downstream.

Treasure: A *detect magic* spell indicates the bow is magical. It is a *+1 chaotic shortbow,* but Korakaia has sabotaged it so that the bowstring has a 90% chance of breaking if used. The bow cannot be pulled from underneath the statue; the statue must first be lifted. (This requires a Strength check, DC 25; the PCs can use the aid another action on page 135 of the *Player's Handbook*.) Once the bow is removed from underneath the statue, a PC with any bow proficiency notices the weakened bowstring with a successful Spot check (DC 15). Replacing the bowstring restores the shortbow to normal.

┆ Amulet of Statues: An *amulet of statues* is a 3-inch stone amulet carved in the shape of a humanoid (or sometimes just a head). Once per day, the wearer can cast the *statue* spell upon herself. An amulet of statues is usually crafted with 50 charges.

Caster Level: 13th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *statue*; *Market Price:* 91,000 gp; *Cost to Create:* 45,500 gp + 3,640 XP; *Weight:* 1 lb.

Korakaia's *amulet of statues* has 10 charges remaining, so it's worth 18,200 gp.

Ad-hoc XP Award: Award 300% of the experience for defeating the vargouilles, due to their advanced nature.

3. FUNGAL GARDEN

The mushrooms and other assorted fungi growing here are harmless. Korakaia uses them as a supplementary food source, and on a whim added a gnome statue made from an appropriate victim.

4. KORAKAIA'S LAIR

The cavern narrows and leads down along a series of natural steps. You hear rushing water ahead.

This is where Korakaia eats, sleeps, and stores part of her loot. There are several old winter blankets piled on the floor, with which Korakaia makes her bed. Stuffed in an old canvas backpack (taken from a slain but not petrified adventurer) is some of her **Treasure**.

Treasure: A dozen sheets of parchment, three quill pens, two vials of ink, a hammer, two chisels, and a small pouch containing 50 gp.

5. POOL

To the south lies a large pool of water. An underground spring runs from northeast to southwest. Near the center of the pool lies a smooth, round rock that juts up just above the water's surface.

The smooth rock is actually the petrified remains of a chuul that entered the pool via the stream. Korakaia has hollowed out a small area under the chuul's body, between its submerged legs. In this gap she keeps the rest of her **Treasure**.

Treasure: A small bag with another 210 gp and 120 sp, a *potion of water breathing*, and a *wand of cure moderate wounds*. The wand has 40 charges remaining, but Korakaia lacks the ability to activate it herself.

If the PCs enter and examine the contents of the pool, they'll find the two petrified heads of statues Q and R, the slain adventurers that the vargouilles currently use as their roosts, as well as a few humanoid bones, the remains of former meals. Most of the rest of the detritus that Korakaia tosses in here has been swept away by the current.

CONCLUSION

The stream winds and meanders for several miles before spilling into an underground lake. You can connect this stream to other existing Underdark locations in your campaign as desired.

If Korakaia escapes, she would make an excellent recurring villain. She's a despicable creature who revels in torture and the pain of others, as evidenced by her treatment of her petrified victims. She's certain to hold a grudge against those who ruined her "perfect hideaway."

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Statue Gallery" is designed for four 9th-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

5th- to 6th-level PCs: Remove Korakaia and the phasm from the lair. When the PCs explore the cavern, Korakaia's out hunting for prey, leaving the defense of her lair to the mimic and vargouilles. Once the PCs have faced the mimic and vargouilles, Korakaia can return for a final confrontation.

7th- to 8th-level PCs: Remove the phasm from the lair.

10th- to 11th-level PCs: Give each vargouille a fighter level or two (otherwise, 10th- or 11th-level PCs won't get any experience for defeating them). Give Korakaia a level or two of ranger. Advance the mimic by 2–3 HD.

12th- to 13th-level PCs: Add 1–2 more fighter levels to the vargouilles. Give Korakaia another couple ranger levels, or add another medusa, Korakaia's sister Kolykaia, a 1st- or 2nd-level monk.

THE PHASM'S PREFERRED FORMS

The phasm changes shape each round to take advantages of a number of ranged attacks. The following are some of its favorite forms:

Creature	STR	DEX	CON	AC	Preferred Attack
Arrowhawk	22	21	16	22	Electricity ray, 2d8
Digester	17	15	17	17	Spit 5 ft. acid stream, 8d8
Rust Monster	10	17	13	18	Antennae touch rusts metal
Troll	23	14	23	18	Claws and teeth; this is the phasm's preferred form for melee

The phasm has no qualms against fleeing if necessary, generally assuming arrowhawk form to do so.

THE PETRIFIED STATUES

A: Male dwarf fighter in scale mail, battleaxe raised overhead.

B: Umber hulk with arms upraised. The statue has toppled over onto a now-skeletal medusa. A shortbow protrudes from underneath the statue.

C: Male gnome wearing a pointy hat.

D: Snarling lizardfolk, unarmed, frozen in an attack stance.

E: Panicked male gnome fighter, sitting on the ground with his right arm raised before him in horror.

F: Frightened kobold, eyes wide in disbelief.

G: Fleeing kobold, both arms raised high in terror.

H: Fleeing kobold, arms forward as if to push others out of his way.

I: Kobold on his knees, clasped hands before him in a pose of pleading supplication.

J: Male human warrior peering out from behind a tower shield.

K: Female elf archer with drawn bow, poised to let fly an arrow. This is really Korakaia using her *hat of disguise* to appear as an elf, and her *amulet of statues* to appear petrified.

L: Male elf archer with drawn bow, poised to let fly an arrow.

M: Female elf spellcaster, right hand thrust forward as if casting a spell.

N: Snarling male half-orc fighter wielding a scimitar and carrying a shield.

O: Surprised female halfling rogue shielding her face with her hands.

P: Male human fighter in plate mail with visored helm down and an arm blocking his face.

Q: Male human fighter wearing a winged helmet, raising his hands protectively over his face. (The winged helmet is really a vargouille that perches here when not attacking. The stone victim's head was removed to make room for the vargouille.)

R: Female human fighter wearing a winged helmet, hiding her face behind her hands. (Likewise, this is a headless statue, upon which is perched a vargouille. The raised hands of the statue help hide the creature's true nature.)

If the PCs use *stone to flesh*, *break enchantment*, or similar spells to restore any of these statues to their normal, living form, they'll learn the depths of Korakaia's depravity. After petrifying them with her gaze, she had the phasm (in troll form) rip the heads off the stone statues and carefully place them back in position. Thus, reverting a statue to flesh merely results in a fresh corpse, whose bloody head topples forward off its neck stump. A Search check (DC 25) reveals the narrow crack along the statue's neckline; once one such crack has been found all other similar Search checks drop to DC 10. Ω

Determined to fight the stereotype, Johnathan hasn't had a mimic disguise itself as a treasure chest yet in all his years of creating adventures.

Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com
OOOHH... WHAT HAPPENED?
I'VE GOT SOME BAD NEWS AND SOME GOOD NEWS AND SOME BAD NEWS...
YOU WERE TURNED TO STONE BY A NASTY-POO MEDUSA ALONG WITH SOME OTHER PEOPLE. AFTER YOU WERE TURNED TO ROCK, SHE BROKE YOUR HEAD OFF. WHEN WE FOUGHT HER, A FEW OF THE STATUES GOT POWDERED, INCLUDING YOUR BODY.
OH. THEN WHY AM I NOT WITH MY DE-PARTED DWARVEN ANCESTORS IN THE AFTERLIFE?
WELL, THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE WERE ABLE TO FIND A BODY WITH A MISSING HEAD AND PUT YOU BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!
THAT'S A RELIEF, BUT YOU SAID YOU HAD SOME MORE BAD NEWS.
WELL...
LET'S JUST SAY THAT USING THE RESTROOM IS GOING TO REQUIRE A WHOLE NEW SKILL SET ON YOUR PART...

LUK
ACS

SWAMP STOMP

BY JEFF WARD

ARTWORK BY CHUCK LUKACS • CARTOGRAPHY BY DIESEL

† Magic Items Monsters NPCs Objects Settlements Traps

"Swamp Stomp" is an adventure suitable for four 4th-level player characters (PCs). The adventure can be modified for stronger or weaker PCs by increasing or decreasing the number and power of opponents, as described in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

The adventure is suitable for all character classes and races, but the party would benefit from someone with the Track feat. DMs should be aware that anyone with the ability to fly could potentially travel to the center of the swamp and enter the naga's lair without meeting any of the marsh hazards.

"Swamp Stomp" combines elements of investigation, roleplaying, and combat. Groups who enjoy a mix of these elements will enjoy the adventure more. "Swamp Stomp" also features a small town that the PCs might become attached to, providing an interesting place from which to branch off into other adventures.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure can fit into any campaign where there is a large city bordered by a marshy area. The swamp in the adventure is called the Feverglades, a haven for wildlife situated next to the farming village of Orchard Meadows. The swamp forms part of the Blackwater River system, which provides drinking water to the city.

The Feverglades are home to the Broken Axe clan of lizardfolk, who have always lived in harmony with the swamp, taking only what is necessary for their survival. Their name is a testament to their choice to give up the warrior life and settle in the Feverglades to make a peaceful living.

These lizardfolk serve an ancient water naga called Naamani, the swamp's self-appointed protector. Naamani recently noticed that the water level of the swamp began to fall after a strange mechanism was installed near its fringe by a gnome engineer named Silas Gruecock four months ago. It is obvious to Naamani that this device is some sort of pump designed to drain the swamp water into a large reservoir that was constructed at the southwestern edge of the swamp.

Naamani sent Ssyrin, chief of the Broken Axe clan, into the village under a flag of truce to see the halfling mayor, Osborne Applebottom. Ssyrin invited Osborne to parley with the lizardfolk at Harley's Mill, (see "Meeting at Harley's Mill"). Mayor Applebottom readily agreed to the meeting, but he is not the cheery good-natured halfling he appears, and his motives do not place the interests of Orchard Meadows first.

Osborne is an ex-adventurer who invested his loot into a number of moneymaking schemes that didn't pan out. Roughly a year ago, he turned to the most lucrative racket of all: politics. After a series of lavish parties and free concerts at his large house, a former theater, the charismatic Osborne won the local election, and became the mayor of Orchard Meadows.

He began anonymously acquiring all the land in and around the swamp through agents in the city. He plans to drain the swamp entirely and wait for its denizens to die, either through lack of water or at the hand of gullible hired adventurers, and then sell the now-fertile farmland land to farmers, settlers, and wealthy folk from nearby cities. To double his profit potential, Osborne is also building a reservoir on other land that he secretly owns. Unknown to the council, he is funding this construction with city funds. Once filled (and the swamp emptied), he plans to declare his ownership of the reservoir and make a fortune selling "his" water to local farmers—water they now get for free.

Osborne has enlisted the help and advice of Ssirine, a half-elemental/half-lizardfolk sorcerer who has her own score to settle with Naamani and Ssyrin (see "Final Conflict"). To stoke his ego and keep suspicions in town down, he has asked Ssirine to come and go from

his house disguised (using *alter self*) as a bewildering array of beautiful women. She has begrudgingly done this in return for Osborne's promise to allow her control of the clan after the swamp is drained.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The party is en route to the village for some reason (see "Adventure Hooks") when they witness a few lizardfolk harassing a pair of young halflings. After facing the lizardfolk down, the PCs learn that the formerly peaceful Broken Axe clan has become restless of late, staging several raids against local farms and orchards. The now-curious PCs are then directed to see the council of Orchard Meadows.

Once the characters arrive in town, they meet the council and Orchard Meadows's mayor, the halfling Osborne Applebottom. The council, desperate for help dealing with the lizardfolk menace, asks the PCs to investigate the swamp, and Mayor Applebottom asks the characters to exterminate the Broken Axe clan tribe.

The adventurers should explore the village and surrounding farms to gain information (see the "Rumor Mill" sidebar) and supplies before setting out for the swamp. The party likely stumbles across the scene of Osborne's perfidious crime in Harley's Mill.

On entering the swamp, the party must deal with traps, creatures, and mosquito-borne disease, as well as the problems of travel in the marsh, before finding the lizardfolk and their naga leader. The party should come to a peaceful arrangement with the naga who informs them of Osborne's treachery. She pleads with the PCs to bring Applebottom to justice. The PCs might also discover the hidden pump responsible for draining the swamp, as well as the concealed reservoir and the large work crew working to continually enlarge it.

When the party returns to town, they then have the opportunity to discover that Osborne has purchased all the swampland with town funds, further cementing the case against the unscrupulous mayor. If the PCs go to Osborne's house to confront him or to claim the reward, they are attacked by Applebottom and Ssirine, who still hope to conceal their activities from the rest of the town by silencing the characters.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You can plant the seeds of interest in Orchard Meadows by having the PCs run across several advertisements in a nearby city seeking adventurers to rid the village of "marauding swamp demons." Other possibilities include:

• A member of the party (either halfling or human) has had a relative murdered by a band of rogue lizardfolk. The man was a widower, a fruit farmer in Orchard Meadows, and the character's family wants them to go to the town, collect the farmer's two children, and return them to the family to be raised.

• A member of the party has been bequeathed a water mill in a will. The mill is called Harley's Mill and is situated on the edge of a swamp near Orchard Meadows. The PC is given a large metal key and a letter of ownership from his solicitor to show to the town council.

• An old mentor of one of the characters, Trond Svensen, has retired to become a blacksmith in a small town called Orchard Meadows. He has requested that his former pupil bring him some meteorite iron, as he wishes to try to forge a sword of exceptional quality. Trond is also the acting sheriff of Orchard Meadows, and when the PCs arrive, he asks them to serve as his posse to investigate the recent turmoil. (This option could be used for weaker parties who would benefit from being accompanied by a 6th-level barbarian, although you should be inventive to keep Trond from dominating encounters.)

• Orchard Meadows is between where the PCs have left and where they're currently heading, placing the PCs on a collision course with the first scene of the adventure (see below).

In any case, once the PCs are on the road to Orchard Meadows and near the town, continue to "Raiding Party" below.

RAIDING PARTY (EL 3)

Three lizardfolk were dispatched by Ssyrin to put a scare into a local halfling farmer. They were in the process of burning some haystacks when they discovered a young halfling couple enjoying the privacy afforded by the remote locale. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs get within a mile or so of Orchard Meadows:

> Your journey is interrupted by a girl's scream and the smell of burning hay. Looking through the 4-foot-high hedgerow, you can see three hulking, scaly humanoids standing over a young halfling couple about 30 feet away. A boy is badly beaten and a girl has a badly torn dress. One of the creatures has set fire to a large haystack and holds a smoldering torch. The humanoids wear leather loincloths and are armed with wickedly barbed longspears.

Creatures: The lizardfolk were engaging in some simple scare tactics when they discovered the young halflings. They're angry at their tribe's treatment,

though, and they're itching for a fight.

Lizardfolk (3): hp 11, 9, 13; *Monster Manual* 129. These lizardfolk wield fishing spears (equivalent to longspears) that deal 1d8+1 points of damage and have a 10-foot reach.

The largest of the lizardfolk (13 hp) has a torch and wears an axe-shaped pendant inlaid with mother-of-pearl (value 100gp).

Tactics: If approached this lizardfolk raiding party throws their spears before closing to melee to use their natural weapons. They attempt to flee in the direction of the swamp if one or more of their number is killed.

Development: Any surviving lizardfolk report the events and a description of the party to Ssyrin and Naamani.

Any damaging area spells aimed at the lizardfolk also affect the young courting couple. Sheriff Svensen does not look kindly on the death of the boy (currently at 0 hp) or his girlfriend (2 hp) at the party's hand, and seeks to arrest the party aided by his two deputies.

The raiders interrupted a courting couple that was "involved" in the haystack the lizardfolk intended to burn. The boy, Jakob Merrybrow, is unconscious but stable. Jakob and his girlfriend Maisy Booginsfoot won't admit what they were up to in the haystack (or that Jakob tore Maisy's dress), but rather say they were rounding-up stray goats when the lizardfolk ambushed them.

Jakob asks to be taken back to the nearby farmhouse, where his father, Jarryd Merrybrow, tells the party of the raids by the evil lizardfolk, and begs the party to go and see his brother Ernest Merrybrow, a cleric of Yondalla in Orchard Meadows (see area **T9**). Ernest will be happy to cure the party free of charge and take the PCs to see the town council (area **T1**).

ORCHARD MEADOWS

The journey from the nearest city to Orchard Meadows is only twenty miles. The journey can be as uneventful as you like until the PCs reach the scene of the lizardfolk ambush.

Orchard Meadows (Village): Conventional; AL LG; 300 gp limit; Assets 12,000 gp; Population 453; Mixed (human 50%, halfling 30%, half-elf 10%, dwarf

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Swamp Stomp" is designed to challenge four 4th-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

1st-level PCs: The adventure is far too challenging for characters of this level as written. Especially difficult are the encounters with Naamani and Ssyrin and the battle with Osborne and his minions. Run the adventure mostly as written, but with the following additional changes:

- Make Osborne a 4th-level rogue, and make Simon and Adrian each 1st level.
- Make Ssyrin a 1st-level barbarian, and eliminate Ronnie from the final encounter in Naamani's Cave, as well as both the lizardfolk in that room (area **N6**).
- Change other encounters with an EL at or near 4 to be at or near 1 or 2 instead. For example, the encounter with the giant crocodile can be replaced with an encounter with a normal crocodile.
- Only give Urthar two 1st-level warriors, instead of five.
- Consider sending Trond Svensen with the PCs as backup.

2nd- and 3rd-level PCs: The adventure is still a bit to difficult for PCs of these levels. Run the adventure as written, but with the following additional changes:

- Make Osborne a 5th-level rogue, and make Simon and Adrian each 2nd level.
- Make Ssyrin a 2nd-level barbarian, and eliminate the two lizardfolk from the final encounter in Naamani's Cave.

5th- and 6th-level PCs: The adventure is probably just fine for PCs of this level, although they might find some of the general encounters a bit easy. Consider sprucing some of those up by adding levels (such as to Ifirth) or HD (to the giant crocodile) to some monsters. Also, consider the following changes if your PCs are having an easy time with the module:

- Give Osborne a fighter level, and Adrian and Simon each another level.
- Add one or two lizardfolk ambushes in the swamp, in which the humanoids rush from cover and try to knock PCs into the water (removing any mosquito repellent) or into the mud (resulting in "bogged" characters).

7th- and 8th-level PCs: PCs at this level will need some additional challenges, although they should still enjoy the roleplaying challenges involved in the adventure. Run the adventure as written, but consider the following additional alterations:

- Give Osborne two fighter levels and another rogue level, and Adrian and Simon each two or three extra levels. Also, give Osborne some nasty poison on his arrows, and some limited flying ability to make the encounters in the theater even more difficult.
- Add multiple creatures to the regular swamp encounters (an "extra" Ifirth or another giant crocodile).
- Make the Random Swamp Encounters more regular to drain more of the group's resources more rapidly.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise the amount of treasure in the adventure. Consult page 170 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (**Tables 7-2**, **7-3**, and **7-4**) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

5%, gnome 3% elf 2%).

Authority Figures: See Town Council sidebar.

Important Characters: Herman Ryder, male human Exp4; Old Mother Grundy, female human Sor1/Adp4.

Others: Deputies (4), male human War1; Exp2 (3); Exp1 (6); Rgr1 (1); Rog1 (2); Com1 (429).

When the PCs crest a final hill in their approach to Orchard Meadows, roughly one mile after the encounter with the lizardfolk raiders, read or paraphrase the following:

> The village of Orchard Meadows nestles in a picturesque valley between rolling hillsides that are a riot of white, pink, and yellow blossoms. Wildflowers carpet the floor beneath the fruit trees and skylarks sing sweetly in the azure sky. Many beehives dot the orchards, while pigs and goats trawl the ground for windfalls. Orchard workers stare at you, gawking at your strange dress, armor, and weapons.

The town itself consists of a series of low wooden buildings and two stone buildings. One, the Municipal Building, serves as courthouse, council chambers, and police station. The other is the mayor's house.

If the PCs head straight to the Municipal Building to speak with the town council, proceed to the encounter at area **T1**. Otherwise, allow them to explore as they will.

T1. MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs approach this building:

> This cream colored stone building dominates the town square. A badly painted coat-of-arms, overemphasizing an apple motif, hangs above the door. Two guards lounge sleepily on wicker chairs before a set of double doors.

TOWN COUNCIL OF ORCHARD MEADOWS

You are encouraged to allow the PCs to suspect any and everyone on the town council. Other red herrings include Herman Ryder (the deposed ex-mayor) and Old Mother Grundy (accused of voodoo by the local cleric).

Mayor Osborne Applebottom: (see "Outside the House").

Town Clerk Cedric Thornton, Male Human Exp2: CR —; Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. 3 in. tall); HD 2d6; hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (flat-footed 10, touch 10); Atk +0 melee (1d3, unarmed strike); AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +3, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +7, Profession (barrister) +7, Read Lips +7, Sense Motive +7. *Feats:* Alertness, Skill Focus (Knowledge—local).

Councilor Ernest Merrybrow, Male Halfling Clr3: CR 3, Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 3d8+3; hp 21; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 13); Atk +3 melee (1d6, club) or +8 ranged (1d4, sling); SA spells, turn undead; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills: (24) Concentration +5, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Heal +8, Profession (farmer) +5, Spellcraft +7. *Feats:* Extra Turning, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (4/3/2; base save DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, light, detect poison, resistance;* 1st—*cure light wounds, invisibility to undead, detect undead, protection from evil;* 2nd—*aid, cure moderate wounds, hold person.*

*Domain spells. *Domains:* Good (good spells +1 caster level); Protection (protective ward).

Sheriff Trond Svensen, Male Human Bbn6: CR 6, Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft 6 in. tall); HD 6d12+18; hp 66; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +12/+7 melee (1d12+7/crit ×3, *+1 greataxe*); SA rage 2/day; SQ fast movement, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +8, Wilderness Lore +4, Listen +4, Jump +8, Swim +6, Ride +7, Intimidate +3, Intuit Direction +2, Spot +3, Craft (Blacksmithing) +2, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +2, Read/write common. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Great axe).

Possessions: +1 greataxe, ring of protection +2, masterwork smithing tools (kept at his forge).

Hamish Goodbody, Male Dwarf Com3: CR —, Medium-size Humanoid (4 ft. tall); HD 3d4+6; hp 18; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/crit 19–20, masterwork longsword); AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Craft (stonemasonry) +3, Handle Animal +2, Profession (shopkeeper) +5, Spot +4, Use Rope +3. *Feats:* Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Toughness.

Froobert Crimson, Male Human Com3: CR —, Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 3d4+3; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/crit 19–20, masterwork short sword); AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills: Handle Animal +3, Listen +3, Profession (brewer) +4, Profession (innkeeper) +4, Spot +3. *Feats:* Skill Focus (Profession—brewer), Skill Focus (Profession—innkeeper).

Guards (2), Male Human War 1: CR 3, Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. tall), HD 1d8+1; hp 6, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/crit 19–20, longsword) AL N; SV Fort +4 Ref +2 Will +1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +3, Jump +2*, Spot +2. *Feats:* Dodge, Weapon Focus (longsword). *Includes armor check penalty.

Possessions: chain shirt, small steel shield, longsword, 12 gp each.

The guards ask the party to leave their weapons at the door before showing them to the council chambers; all six members (see sidebar) are present. A diplomatic PC can make a Diplomacy check (DC 20) to convince the guards to let him remain armed. PCs might also try to hide weapons about their person with successful Pick Pockets checks, opposed by the guards' Spot checks.

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs are taken to the Council Chamber:

> The Council Chamber is beautifully finished in polished oak wall paneling. At the head of a large wooden table is an abnormally large chair. The chair is occupied by a small fat halfling, whose chubby face is mirrored in an enormous oil portrait above him, which hangs alongside smaller portraits of previous mayors. The halfling has elaborate curly hair and wears rich purple robes. He has a jeweled short sword at his belt. Also present, seated on his right and scribbling furiously with a large quill, is a thin, bald, hatchet-faced man. Although his head is down, you can feel his eyes darting around. You also see a burly human man wearing the attire of a blacksmith, a well-fed halfling man, a male dwarf with a long, black beard, and a male human who has the yeasty scent you associate with brewing beer.
>
> The halfling introduces himself as Mayor Osborne Applebottom and introduces the scribbling man as the town clerk, Cedric Thornton. He then clumsily jumps the 6 inches from his chair to the floor and walks over to the party.
>
> "Greetings, travelers. Who might you be? And do you have business with the town council of Orchard Meadows?"

If the PCs make it clear they're here to help Orchard Meadows, or even if they make it clear that they're adventurers, Mayor Applebottom proceeds with the boxed text below. If the PCs simply state that they're travelers curious about the trouble in town, they're politely asked to leave, but Sheriff Trond catches up with the characters later and asks for their help himself.

If questioned, the mayor and other members of the council can tell the PCs the following information:

- The attacks have been occurring for about the past 6–8 weeks.
- Sheriff Trond doesn't have the manpower to make a foray into the Feverglades. No one in town is really familiar with the swamp, as it's long been respected as the domain of the Brokan Axe clan.
- No one from town has ventured anywhere within a mile of the swamp since the attacks began.
- Old Mother Grundy might have some unguents to help the PCs survive the swamp, should they decide to look around there.

Once the PCs agree to help, read or paraphrase the following:

> The halfling continues, "Well, welcome to our humble town. The Right Honorable Town Council of Orchard Meadows waits with baited breath to hear whether such mighty adventurers will deign to aid us in our hour of need. We need you to go into the Feverglades and destroy the rogue lizardfolk that have brought naught but chaos and spilled blood to our peaceful hamlet. These scaly demons have been attacking the homesteads that border the swamp and we are but poor farmers. For this service, you will be richly rewarded with 100 pieces of platinum, the entire profit from this year's crop. What say you?"

If asked why he is armed, Osborne flourishes his sword clumsily and explains dramatically that he has taken to wearing his grandfather's sword to defend "his" people.

If the PCs agree to help, the mayor asks Councilor Froobert to arrange for rooms at the Apple Cart Inn (although the characters are still expected to pay), and he instructs the sullen Cedric to take the party to their lodgings. The Council then turns to other business.

Osborne has been hoping that someone would show up who would be willing to rid him of the lizardfolk threat. Otherwise, his plans to drain the swamp and profit off the sale of land and fresh water remains in jeopardy. He has no intention of paying the party the reward money; he plans to keep it for himself (see "Back to Town" for details).

Should the PCs decide not to help Orchard Meadows, they are asked politely to leave so the council can get to other business. Later, however, Sheriff Trond seeks the PCs out and pleads for their aid.

T2. Osborne Applebottom's House

This large building was originally a theatre, but Osborne has renovated it into his home and setting for

his elaborate soirees. See "Back to Town" for details.

Any passerby on the street can tell the PCs who owns the building and what it used to be. The theater closed down before Osborne's arrival due to the small size of the town and a general lack of interest in the theatrical arts.

T3. OLD MOTHER GRUNDY'S COTTAGE

A woman named Mother Grundy runs this small, black-painted shop. Smells, both aromatic and acrid, pervade the air, and strange fibrous objects hang from the porch. A raven eyes visitors suspiciously from a nearby tree as you approach. The door is ajar.

The door leads into a well-stocked shop. Crystals hang from the ceiling and numerous pots bubble noisily over a large fire. A wizened old crone with very few teeth greets you with a wide smile, although you wish that she hadn't.

Mother Grundy is the local adept, a former sorcerer and quite powerful for a town of this size. The townsfolk come to the wise woman for advice, much to the dismay of the nosey Ernest Merrybrow, but only when they can pluck up their courage and overcome their superstitions. Mother Grundy fuels these superstitions through liberal use of *dancing lights* and *ghost sound* spells, which she occasionally casts when in a cantankerous mood. (These spells delight the children of Orchard Meadows, which in turn secretly delights Mother Grundy—although she'd never admit it.)

The raven is Mother Grundy's familiar, Quoth, who watches the shop and ensures that Mother Grundy is never surprised. Quoth speaks Common but rarely lets on that he can do so. He attacks if he feels the party poses a threat (see below).

The shop contains salves and potions for every ailment, from upset stomach to impotence, and these are listed on a scrawled chalkboard in the corner. Two items of note are Mother Grundy's Patented Malodorous Mosquito Murderer and something called Poison Poison (see the sidebar).

Mother Grundy, Female Human Sor1/Adp4: CR 4, Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 3 in. tall); HD 4d6 plus 1d4; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +0 (1d4–2/crit 19–20, dagger); AL N; SV Fort +1 Ref +2 Will +8; Str 6, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 19, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills: Alchemy +14*, Concentration +8, Heal +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +6†, Profession (herbalist) +12, Scry +6, Spot +6†. *Feats:* Alertness†, Brew Potion, Track, Skill Focus (Alchemy). *Includes Skill Focus (Alchemy) bonus. †Includes bonus granted by familiar.

Adept Spells Prepared (3/3/1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, mending, purify food and drink;* 1st—*cure light wounds, protection from evil, sleep;* 2nd—*delay poison.*

Sorcerer Spells Known (4/2; base save DC = 11 + spell level): 0—*ghost sound, dancing lights, disrupt undead, detect poison;* 1st—*mage armor, shocking grasp.*

Possessions: +1 dagger, candle of invocation (NG), masterwork alchemists' lab, 115 gp.

Quoth, Raven Familiar: CR —; Tiny Magical Beast; HD 1/4 d8; hp 11; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft.; AC 17 (touch 15, flat-footed 15); Atk +3 melee (1, claw); SA touch; SQ improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, speak with master, grants Alertness, speaks Common; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Spot +7, Listen +7. *Feats:* Weapon Finesse (claw).

Tactics: The raven has a *shocking grasp* spell charge carried in its claw, which it uses against attackers should combat break out. Mother Grundy shouts for help and uses *sleep* and *shocking grasp* to keep opponents at bay until Sheriff Trond and a pair of deputies arrive (within 3 rounds).

T4. THE APPLE CART INN

This welcoming, fairly crowded inn features a roaring fire in the hearth against one wall. Drinking seems very much the secondary activity here; the villagers come here to play games. One wall holds seven whale-bristle dartboards and "Nine-pins" is

NEW ALCHEMICAL GOODS

Mosquito Murderer: A sickly yellow-green paste distilled from goat dung, plant extracts, and citronella oil, wearing this affords complete protection from mosquitoes. However, it lowers the wearer's effective Charisma score by 2 points owing to its appalling smell. The paste needs to be reapplied every 12 hours, and one day's dose costs 5 sp.

Poison Poison: This is a kill-or-cure antidote to most things that corrupt the blood. When swallowed, the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 12). If successful, the antidote provides a +5 alchemical bonus on Fortitude saving throws against disease for the next 24 hours. If the save fails, the character takes 2 points of Constitution damage but still gains the beneficial effects. Poison poison acts as a *potion of remove disease* against swamp fever. A dose costs 7 gp.

played in the alley between the pub and the smithy. Gamblers engaged in a game involving coins and a piece of wood huddle in one corner of the bar.

The game of coins is called Two-up, and it involves tossing two coins simultaneously from a flat piece of wood, gamblers bet on the heads and tails combinations that result. Bets are thrown on the floor by the intoxicated gamblers, making it ripe for would-be thieves (grant Pick Pockets checks a +4 circumstance bonus, netting a total of 2d10 sp).

Froobert Crimson and his homely daughter Griselda run the inn. Froobert is an alcoholic widower, a tall thin man whose surname is a nickname derived from the color of his rather bulbous nose. He carries a masterwork short sword given to him by his drinking buddy Trond Svensen. Griselda is hopelessly infatuated with Trond Svensen, but he doesn't know it.

The fare is simple, but the meats are remarkably succulent and sweet (from the animals' fruit-rich diet). Most of the drinks available are predominantly based on fruit; cloudy apple cider, or "Scrumpy," is the most popular and most intoxicating, followed by "Perry," its pear-based equivalent. These homebrews cost 2 cp per tankard and have names like Billy Benson's Bottom Biter and Old Enoch's Trouser Lifter. Fruit wine and apple blossom champagne are more expensive at 1 sp per glass. Mead from the orchard hives is plentiful at 3 cp per tankard. There are three rooms available to hire upstairs that have been reserved for the party

Froobert Crimson: see the "Town Council of Orchard Meadows" sidebar for details.

T5. TROND SVENSEN'S SMITHY AND WHEELWRIGHT

"Not from round these parts," Trond came to the village seven years ago and bought the smithy. Trond is the town sheriff and is also on the town council. He is very tall and has long, snow-white hair that he keeps in a ponytail. Trond is a barbarian who has turned his prodigious strength to making carts and shoeing horses for the local farms. His smithy is well equipped and he keeps his masterwork tools in excellent condition.

Although a gentle giant, he flies into a rage if anyone touches his tools or his anvil (under which his life savings—300 pp—are hidden). Should this happen, he attacks with his fists, but if anyone is foolish enough to draw a weapon or use magic, he pulls his magical greataxe from above the hearth and doesn't hesitate to defend himself. Moving the anvil requires a successful Strength check (DC 20).

Trond is very protective of his home and generally distrusts outsiders (although if you use the hook that one of the PCs knows Trond, he'll be more receptive). He defends anyone under attack in Orchard Meadows with two of his four deputies, calling them from their

duties guarding the Municipal Building. The party will require strong evidence to prove the guilt of Mayor Osborne to the trusting Trond.

Trond Svensen: see the "Town Council of Orchard Meadows" sidebar for details.

T6. SEED MERCHANT

This low timber building contains the finest collection of seeds and branch grafts for fruit trees anywhere. The owner is a human called Herman Ryder, who was the mayor of the village before he was ousted by Osborne. A bitter man, he dislikes Osborne intensely and would be delighted to help the party if they bring evidence uncovering Osborne's scheme (see "Concluding the Adventure".)

Herman Ryder, Male Human Exp4: CR 3, Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 4d6+4; hp 17; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +3 (1d4/crit 19–20, dagger); AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: (69) Appraise +9, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (nature) +11, Profession (farmer) +11, Profession (herbalist) +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9, Use Rope +6. *Feats:* Skill Focus (Knowledge—nature), Skill Focus (Profession—farmer), Track.

Possessions: Nothing of significance; all his wealth is invested in his business.

T7. HAMISH GOODBODY PROVISIONS

Hamish is an "overworked, underpaid" dwarf distrusted by the town. He is miserable and tight-fisted and a long-standing member of the town council, famous for holding up change of all kinds. He has ambitions to be mayor, and considers other council members "Osborne's lackeys."

He adamantly refuses to hire staff to help in his shop and the result is hard work for Hamish and a long wait for customers. Hamish has a stable behind his shop that contains a plow and two horses, as well as chickens, goats, and pigs. All goods are at 20% higher prices than those listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Hamish was once a warrior in training, but he was cast out from his clan for his all-consuming love of money. His father shunned him and sent him away, but gave him a masterwork longsword as a parting gift. Hamish keeps it under the counter but would only use it in self-defense or in defense of the town.

RUMOR MILL

The PCs are liable to do some snooping in town. If they stop to ask about recent events, give them the opportunity to make some Gather Information checks. The DCs listed below are a guideline you can use to give them something to pique their information. At the same time, if you feel that your group needs some guidance or is otherwise lost as to how to proceed, dropping one of these in the Apple Cart Inn as a couple patrons talk to each other is equally acceptable.

DC 10 "The lizardfolk have been attacking the farms that border the swamp."

"That Osborne, he's running a house of ill repute."

"The lizardfolk have always left us alone, but now they've gone crazy."

"The lizardfolk killed local farmers Kane Goodmoss (halfling) and Stuart Trimble (human)."

"That evil old witch Grundy has a demon in raven-form. She dances naked with the demon by the light of the full moon."

"That blacksmith, Trond Svensen, he's a bloody werewolf, I tell ya! I seen him changing one night during a full moon. It turned my teeth white to see it."

DC 15 "The lizardfolk are a peaceful bunch, and their leader went up to town under a flag of truce a while back. Obviously didn't work!"

"The lizardfolk live in the center of the Feverglades."

"If you're going into the swamp, best take some of that bug repellent that Old Mother Grundy makes."

"Times is hard. My crop yields are down 'cause of the lack a water. Must be another trick of them lizardfolk."

DC 18 "The lizardfolk? They live near the center of the Feverglades. If you head northeast out of town, you'll come to the bridge. Follow the westerly path toward the river and cross there to find 'em.

"There's been some strange going's-on at Harley's Mill. I heard some shoutin' and cussin' out there about two months back. But nothin' since. Where's it at? Near the center of the swamp, but toward the west more."

"Osborne has women in and out of his house all the time. They're always different, but always tall and beautiful. Hubba hubba."

DC 20 "I sold a big strip of my land that backs onto the Feverglades recently to one of those city slickers. I don't know his name, but he must be bloody stupid! Why buy a strip 20 yards wide and 100 yards long? Half of it was underwater anyway!"

"I saw some lizardfolk leaving Harley's Mill with a couple of halfling captives a couple months ago. Must be bad if they've started taking hostages."

"I saw a strange gnome working in the Feverglades, rigging up some contraption with a capstan. I don't rightly remember where exactly it was, though."

He uses it two-handed and his stats reflect this.

Hamish Goodbody: see the "Town Council of Orchard Meadows" sidebar for details.

T8. MARKET-SQUARE

Markets are held in this cobbled area. A statue of the Green Lady, an ancient leaf-covered elven fertility deity, stands on a raised dais accessible by a small flight of steps. A spring pours forth from the figure's mouth, and an inscription is carved across her stomach.

The inscription is in elven and reads, "Water is Life." Investigation (Gather Information, DC 15) might reveal that an underground stream feeds the statue and that "it used to be a real gusher." It is now just a trickle (testament to the fallen water table in the swamp).

The market is held twice per week, selling local produce and offering apprentices for hire to the local farms and businesses. The market square also serves as the point of departure and arrival for coaches and wagons.

T9. TEMPLE

This low wooden building, always with a fresh apple bough above the door, is a temple to Yondalla, but doubles as a place of worship for other deities. Services are held for each denomination by the current cleric, Ernest Merrybrow.

Ernest is a thin halfling, tall for his race, with sun-ripened cheeks and a red handlebar moustache. Ernest has a pathological fear of undead and always carries the spells necessary to protect against the "unholy menace." This fear stems from an encounter with a wraith (the one that lives in the swamp), which left Ernest a level lower than he once was. A prying gossip, he has a jealous dislike of Old Mother Grundy, and his recent sermons have touched heavily on the evils of witchcraft and turning away from the church for guidance.

In his desk drawers are 33 gp, a silver mirror worth 50 gp, a silver holy symbol, wooden stakes and a mallet, and a scroll of *consecrate* and *summon monster III*.

Aside from a brief stint as an adventurer, Ernest has always lived in the town, and he is a wealth of information on local affairs (add +4 to Gather Information checks if Ernest is specifically consulted about something). Aside from the information presented in the sidebar, he can also tell the PCs that he remembers Ssyrin's visit to the town hall under a flag of truce, and that the lizardfolk had a small lizard perched on his shoulder (Ssparky). Ernest knows nothing specific about locations in the swamp, and he has no clue about Osborne's recent land acquisitions or his treacherous dealing with the lizardfolk.

THE FEVERGLADES

The Feverglades are the ancestral home of the Broken Axe clan of lizardfolk. The formerly peaceful tribe enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with Orchard Meadows. The swamp and its denizens provided a buffer against raiders from the north and west, and the townsfolk, in turn, left the lizardfolk to their own designs, even occasionally conducting some trade with the tribe.

Until recently, the only swampland any of the townsfolk cared about were the few acres some of the farmers owned right on the border between the swamp and good farmland and pastures. The Feverglades aren't stagnant like many swamps. A concourse of the Blackwater river flows through its center, although slowly, circulating the entire swamp area with plenty of fresh water. This also means that the soil beneath the water hasn't been accumulating the filth associated with stagnant swamps. In fact, the gently flowing water has left quite a deposit of fertile topsoil just beneath the water table. This is one of the main reasons Osborne Applebottom concocted his scheme in the first place.

The following sections detail the hazards associated with trekking through the Feverglades. Unless the PCs were particularly successful at their Gather Information checks, they're likely to pursue a semi-random path through the swamp. It's not imperative for them to meet the lizardfolk or discover the pump and reservoir. One or the other will suffice. At the same time, both encounters are a great deal of fun. If the PCs seem to have had enough of swamp life and are looking to head back to town before meeting Naamani and Ssyrin, go ahead and have the lizardfolk approach the PCs themselves. Conversely, if the PCs have met with the lizardfolk but haven't explored the reservoir area, you might consider adding an encounter with a group of reservoir workers heading back to the worksite after a trip to the Apple Cart Inn in town, allowing the characters to find their way to the massive construction project.

TRAVEL IN THE SWAMP

If characters stray from the "paths" without magical means (water walking, flight, and so on) there is a 25% chance that they become stuck in the marshy ground. This chance increases by 5% every round thereafter if the PC stands still, by 10% per round if the character tries to move, or by 15% if the PC is involved in combat or is heavily encumbered. Begin stuck, or "bogged," as the locals call it, means the character is effectively entangled (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 84).

Freeing a character from the bog requires him to brace against another character or solid object and

then make Strength check (DC 15). Any character falling into the swamp immediately loses all protection afforded by Old Mother Grundy's Malodorous Mosquito Murderer.

Moving through the swamp consists of following the narrow trails that traverse the terrain. Speed is 1/2 the normal rate due to the uncertain footing. PCs who want to move faster, such as in a fight, must make a successful Balance check (DC 10) or end up in the water and muck adjoining the trails. Running is impossible, as is mounted travel.

MOSQUITO HAZARDS

While in the swamp, there is a chance that a character contracts a mosquito-borne disease. The symptoms of the illness, known as swamp fever, include muscle fatigue, nausea, and a high temperature.

When a character is exposed to swamp fever, he or she must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 12). Success indicates that the character has managed to avoid infection. Failure means that after an incubation time of 12 hours, the character takes 1d3 points of Constitution damage and 1d3 points of Strength damage. Every 24 hours thereafter the PC needs to make another Fortitude save (DC 12) or take a further 1d3 points of Con and Strength damage. If the victim passes two successive saving throws, their immune system has overcome the disease, and lost abilities are recovered at the standard rate. Mother Grundy's Poison Poison acts as a *neutralize poison* spell for the purposes of curing this disease only.

FEATURES

The Feverglades are generally a warm, boggy place. The few paths are narrow, but never more than 5 feet wide except at a convergence of paths, where they are 10 feet wide.

The most important feature of the swamp, however, is the lowered water table. Osborne Applebottom isn't stupid. He knows that anyone who snoops around the swamp is liable to notice the signs of the water level dropping in the form of exposed swamp grass and cattails, water lines on tree trunks, and formerly submerged objects becoming exposed to the air. Patrols from the reservoir (see area **S2**) are responsible, in part, for spotting these signs and correcting them where they can. For example, they've removed the stepping stones in area **S5** multiple times, with great effort, but the lizardfolk keep replacing them to match the newly lowered water level. But mostly, Osborne relies on the slow pace of the water loss, the warm weather, and the natural tendency of the abundant life in the swamp to conceal his tracks. The newly exposed surfaces of trees and rocks dry out within a week, and the swamp grass quickly dries out and is replaced by more typical dry land plants.

The water drops at a rate of about 1 foot every two months, which means that the water table has dropped about 4 feet over the past eight months. The progress has almost completely halted, however, due or the interference of the lizardfolk. Refer to "The Water Table" sidebar below to determine how much of the change in the swamp the PCs notice.

Encounter spotting distance in the swamp is 3d6 × 10 feet, unless stated otherwise.

S1. HARLEY'S MILL

This ramshackle mill was the scene of the ambush by Osborne and his henchmen.

> A stone water mill with a black slate roof stands near the edge of the swamp. The millpond is dry but thick with 8-foot-high bulrushes, and a dilapidated mill wheel turns back and forth slightly in the breeze. It looks like this mill has gone unoccupied for many years.

The door is unlocked, but there is a lizardfolk corpse behind the door, requiring a Strength check (DC 12) to push open. The three windows are boarded up with thin wood that can easily be removed. A Listen check (DC 15) at the door or window reveals the sound of buzzing flies. A Spot check (DC 18) at the door reveals faint blood spatters on the doorjamb.

> Inside the mill, you smell the faint odor of decay, and the musty stench of age. The skeletons of four humanoid creatures lie on the floor, and the air is thick with flies. Lying by one of the corpses is a white banner showing a red greataxe, its haft broken in two. Also on the floor are five darts and two daggers.

PCs can make a Heal check (DC 13) to determine that the skeletons are those of lizardfolk. A check result of 15 or higher also reveals that the lizardfolk died as a result of wounds suffered from weapons, and a result of 20 or more reveals that the bodies have been here for approximately two months.

The daggers are an identical, matched pair of ivory handled masterwork daggers (the set is worth 650 gp) that belonged to a set of halfling twins named Ronnie and Reggie (see "The Meeting at Harley's Mill," below). There is nothing else of interest.

THE MEETING AT HARLEY'S MILL

Osborne arrived at the mill before the time appointed for his meeting with Ssyrin, along with his henchmen,

Simon and Adrian. He also brought Ssirine and a pair of halfling rogues, identical twins named Ronnie and Reggie. The ambush went badly, and although they killed four lizardfolk, the villains fled, leaving the injured rogues to the mercy of the lizardfolk.

The two months since the ambush have been difficult for the citizens of Orchard Meadows, as the PCs have already learned. This event, on top of the draining of the swamp, was the final straw for Naamani and Ssyrin. Outraged at the treacherous ambush, Naamani sent her lizardfolk to attack the orchards adjacent to the swamp, killing livestock and attacking anyone that tried to stop them. Two farmers, one halfling (Kane Goodmoss) and one human (Stuart Trimble), have been killed in these raids.

Naamani also used her powers to *charm* the two captured halflings, Ronnie and Reggie. She has been using them to disable the pump that was draining the swamp, as well as to set traps along the swamp trails.

S2. THE RESERVOIR (EL VARIABLE)

At the west end of the swamp is a busy worksite. Men and horses toil feverishly in the hot sun, dragging baskets of earth and stone as they put the finishing touches on a gully dam set between two hills and enlarge a large, partially filled pond behind the dam. The pond seems to be lined with shale to keep the water from seeping back out into the surrounding soil.

To the west and south of the reservoir, you see a haphazard camp of shapeless tents and lazily smoking fires. It looks like another group of men, equal in size to the work force in the reservoir, lounges about, eating, sleeping, or gambling to pass the time.

Creatures: The workers are all drifters hired by Ssirine, in the disguise of a shapely, cowled woman. None of them are known in Orchard Meadows, and none of them knows much about the town. They do know that if folks from town come poking around, they're not to say anything, but instead to get one of the six guards (see below). The workers flee if attacked, even if their numbers are overwhelming.

Reservoir Worker, Male Human Com1: CR —; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +0 melee (1d6, club) or +0 melee (1d3 subdual, unarmed strike); SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +1, Listen +1, Use Rope +2. *Feats:* Toughness.

Possessions: Club, shovel, pouch containing 3 gp.

Creatures (EL 3 or 5): The guards are mercenaries led by a hulking dwarven ranger named Urthar Gorehammer. He's fairly lax in his guard policy, though, since the camp at the reservoir has only been attacked once by a group of three lizardfolk, who were easily repelled by the guards.

Urthar Gorehammer, Male Dwarf Rgr2: CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (dwarf); HD 2d10+4; hp 17; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d10+2/crit ×3, dwarven waraxe) or +2 ranged (1d8+2/crit ×3, mighty composite longbow [+2]); SA favored enemy (elves) +1; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NE; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Handle Animal +4, Jump +5*, Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim –6*, Wilderness Lore +5. *Feats:* Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Track. *Includes armor check or penalty accrued from weight of possessions.

Possessions: potion of swimming, studded leather, large wooden shield, dwarven waraxe, mighty composite longbow [+2] with 20 arrows, belt pouch with 16 gold.

Reservoir Guards, Male Human War1: CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (touch 11, flat-footed 13); Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/crit ×3, battleaxe); SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +3, Listen +1, Spot +2. *Feats:* Toughness.

Possessions: leather armor, buckler, battleaxe, pouch containing 7 gp.

Tactics: Urthar is unscrupulous and lazy, but he's not a coward. If the PCs are spotted, he rounds up his guards and heads off to intercept them. Urthar attacks elves before any other foe. The other guards focus on one opponent at a time.

Development: Twice a day, a guard patrol leaves the camp and takes a tour of the southern swamp reaches. One such patrol is led by Urthar, the other by another guard. The patrols' job consists of looking for interlopers. If any are spotted, a report is made to Urthar. Urthar then tries to find and tail any snoops until they either leave the area or head toward the reservoir.

The problem with Urthar's strategy is that the odds are so slim that the patrols actually cross paths with invaders that they're virtually worthless—hence the lack of contact the PCs have with the guards unless they actually approach the camp themselves. Assume that when the PCs arrive at the reservoir camp, there's a flat 80% chance all six guards are present, lounging about the camp and chatting with the off-shift workers. Otherwise, only three are present, including Urthar.

If the PCs are able to interrogate one of the workers or a guard other than Urthar, either by luring one out alone, waiting until someone from camp heads to the latrine, or another such tactic, they can discover little, as the men are kept in the dark concerning their employment. If magic is not used, the PCs must con-

vince the worker they aren't from town with a successful Bluff or Diplomacy check, opposed by the worker's Wisdom check (they don't have Sense Motive ranks). An Intimidate, Diplomacy, or Gather Information check (DC 15) then reveals that the men are all drifters hired to dig the reservoir, that there are forty men total that work in two shifts of 10 hours each, and that the only outsider they ever see is the mysterious, cowled woman who comes every week to drop off their pay and supplies with Urthar, the lazy ranger in charge of guarding the area.

The workers suspect that the woman comes from Orchard Meadows, since it's the only town near here, and they are under the impression that she's very beautiful, although none has ever seen her face save Urthar. They also know that the job has been progressing for about eight months, but few of the men have worked for that long. The average worker stays on for only a couple months before moving on. Finally, the workers know Urthar's patrol routine and can share that information with the PCs.

The men know what they're doing, but they don't understand the repercussions to Orchard Meadows, nor do they particularly care. The pay is good (1 gp each per week), and the food is free.

If Urthar is captured, he can only add that the same woman has never come with a delivery twice. She's always beautiful, always human, and she never says much, but otherwise, she's a different person each time.

S3. THE FEVERGLADES

Breasting a rise on the cart track from the farms, a large white cloud shines in the distance. On closer inspection, the cloud is in fact a moving mass of flamingos, egrets, and herons that fill the air above the Feverglades.

Closer still and the hum of insects punctuated with the high-pitched whine of the ubiquitous mosquitoes is distracting. Flycatchers and swallows swoop constantly between the hanging cypresses and willows, catching the plump insects on the wing.

Water buffaloes munch thoughtfully on water lily bulbs, small deer no higher than your knee bend theirs to drink at the water's edge, and crocodiles bask lazily, soaking up the sun. In spite of the abundant wildlife, you are most preoccupied by the large, gray-striped mosquitoes that constantly alight on any exposed piece of flesh, drinking deeply from your blood.

The level of the swamp has fallen dramatically and much of the swamp is now above water. The reason there are even paths to follow in the swamp is due almost entirely to the dropping water table (see "The Water Table" chart for details).

There are two trails that lead off into the swamp from the end of the track from Orchard Meadows. Anyone who makes a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) can clearly make out that the path heading west and north is the most regularly used by lizardfolk.

Throughout the swamp, the lizardfolk tend to avoid the fixed monster encounters, especially the Peat-cutter's Cottage and Tendriculos. Lizardfolk tracks, uniformly seen on DC15 throughout the swamp are not present within 40 feet of either place.

S4. PEAT-CUTTER'S COTTAGE (EL 5)

This cottage is apparently a safe haven in a hostile swamp. It can be, once the party defeats its two denizens: an assassin vine and a halfling wight that have a symbiotic relationship.

THE WATER TABLE

The water table in the Feverglades is dropping. Although the signs of this change in the terrain and ecology isn't totally obvious to the untrained, someone with a keen eye or some knowledge of the natural world can glean some information from just walking around the swamp. Whenever your PCs make a point of Searching an area within the swamp (but not within a structure within the swamp) or if they specifically ask if something isn't "normal" about the swamp, refer to the following chart:

Skill	DC	Information
Knowledge (nature)	10	The PC notices some a dying clump of cattails just above the waterline.
Search	15	
Knowledge (nature)	15	The PC notices that the soil near the edge of the swamp is incredibly rich and black, like it had never been cultivated before.
Profession (farmer)	15	
Search	20	
Knowledge (nature)	25	The PC spots a distinctive water ring on several trees in a grove growing up out of the water. The rings are each about 6 inches above the current water line. Closer inspection reveals that there are four or five similar rings at higher intervals on the tree's trunk, but they're partially obscured by a thick moss that grows on the exposed trunks and roots of most of the trees.

In a clearing beneath the thick cypress trees stands a low wooden hut on rotting stilts. The cottage has a timber-framed roof covered in thick peat sods, although ivy covers the whole roof with shiny emerald leaves. The garden around the cottage was once well tended, but it is now abandoned and overgrown with wild raspberries. The many tools that litter the garden mark this as an abandoned peat-cutter's cottage. The house has a stout wooden door and shuttered windows.

If characters state that they are looking at the roof, allow a Spot, Wilderness Lore, or Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) to notice that the ivy is not normal. Druids in the party easily spot the assassin vine for what it is with a successful Spot check (DC 10) due to their nature sense ability. If any of the party approaches the cottage door they can make out the name "Orville Rowlinson" in faint lettering. They can also make out the ivy very well, as it attacks as soon as the PCs enter the raspberry patch.

Assassin Vine: hp 30; *Monster Manual* 20.

Tactics: The assassin vine attempts to entangle PCs using the raspberry bushes. If the party tries to escape the vine by running into the cottage, a small, well-hidden wight, the former halfling peat cutter, has a good chance of surprising them.

Halfling Wight: CR 3; Small Undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d3 and energy drain, slam); SA energy drain, create spawn; SQ undead; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +16, Search +7, Spot +8. *Feats:* Blind-Fight.

Wight special attacks and qualities are detailed on page 183 of the *Monster Manual*.

The interior of the hut is remarkably homely and clean. Orville was, and still is, a keen gardener. All scraps of meat or bone from his victims are cleaned up and placed lovingly on the roots of his assassin vine. The room contains a bed, a table, and four chairs.

Treasure: In one corner is a large wardrobe containing neatly folded halfling clothes, 30 gp, a 200 gp freshwater pearl, a steel flask containing a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, and a masterwork halfling kama.

S5. THE STEPPING STONES (EL 4)

The western path across the Blackwater River consists of some round, brown stepping stones, carefully placed for a creature with a stride slightly longer than that of a human. The stones show the occasional scratch, indicating that clawed feet traverse them often. The river is 25 feet wide and there are eight stones.

The stepping-stones are easy to cross, but there are two very slippery ones in the center, requiring a successful Balance check (DC 12) to avoid slipping and falling in the 4-foot-deep water. Lurking in the water is a giant crocodile, waiting for fresh meat.

Crocodile, Giant: hp 59; *Monster Manual* 195.

Tactics: If no one falls in, the crocodile attacks the third party member who tries to cross.

Development: These are the stones that Osborne ordered removed to help hide traces of the dropping water level in the swamp. The lizardfolk keep replacing them to make crossing the river easier; the new stones are always just high enough for the tribe to use safely, but low enough that the crocodile (which they know lives in this stretch of the river) can snatch unwary invaders as they cross. Evidence that something heavy (the two previous sets of river stones) was dragged onto the southern bank of the river can be found with a suc-

RANDOM SWAMP ENCOUNTERS

Once an hour during the day, and once every 3 hours at night, there's a 30% chance the PCs run in to one of the inhabitants of the Feverglades out and about. Roll 1d20 and consult the following chart to determine the encounter. Each encounter should only happen once.

1–3 Ifirth the Nixie: Ifirth is out looking for people to harass. See "Stone Bridge" for details.

4–6 Giant Praying Mantis: hp 26; *Monster Manual* 206.

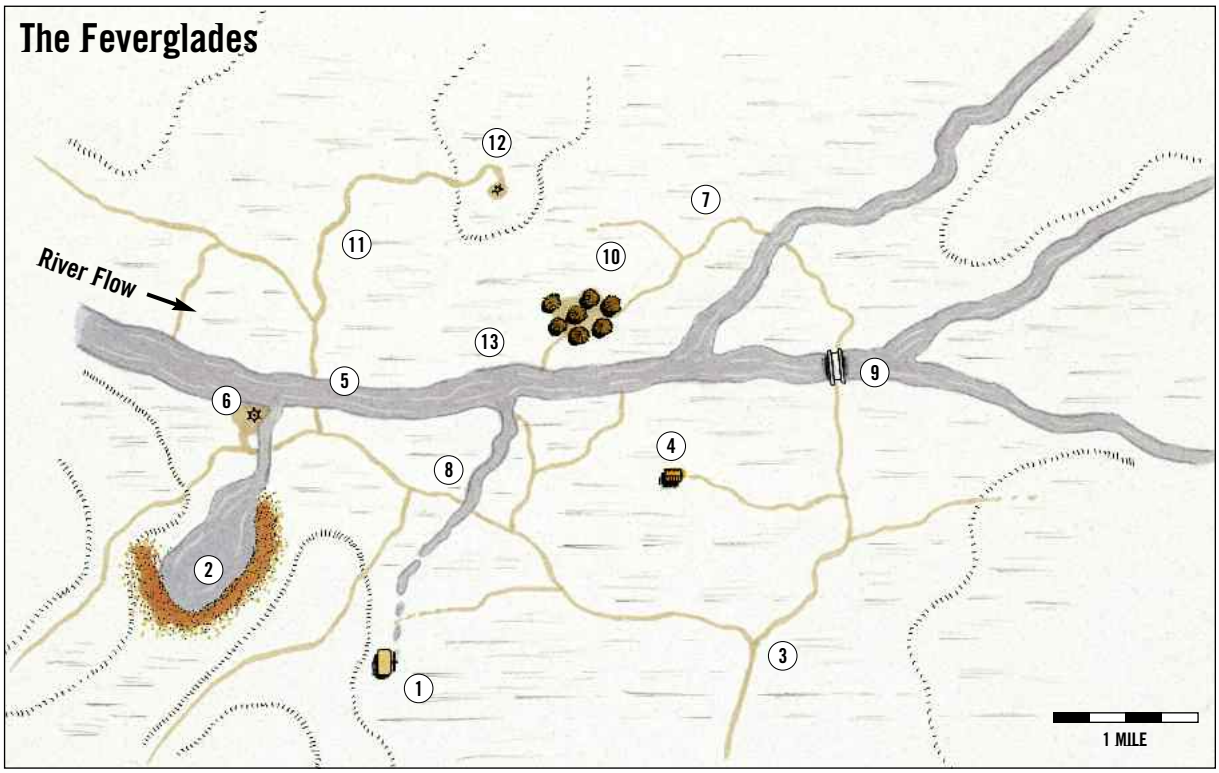
7–10 Bog Patch: A seemingly solid spot in the trail gives way beneath the lead PC, dumping him or her into the soft mud and water of the swamp. See "Travel in the Swamp" for details. Treat this as a CR 1 encounter.

11–14 Lizardfolk (2): These hunters are armed with one fishing spear each. They throw their spears when they see the PCs (assuming they're minions of Osborne) and flee in the direction of their village).

15–16 Monstrous Trapdoor Spider, Large: hp 22; *Monster Manual* 210. This is a smaller version of the spider encountered in area **S8**.

17–18 Shocker Lizards (3): The party has stumbled across a shocker lizard nest. See the *Monster Manual,* page 164 for shocker lizard statistics.

19–20 Wraith: This encounter takes place at night only. This is the wraith that created Orville and drained Ernest, there is only one in the swamp. See page 185 in the *Monster Manual* for details.



cessful Search check (DC 15). A PC who swims into the river (Swim, DC 18) can find the sixteen previous sets of stones. One set is much larger than the current stones, while the second is somewhere between the other two in size. Although a minor clue, combined with others, it might be enough to help the characters realize what's going on in the Feverglades.

S6. THE PUMPS (EL 2)

At the western edge of a swamp is a large capstan with yokes and tack for four oxen. The capstan is designed to rotate and lift water in scoops from a 20-foot-deep pit on the riverbank into a large wooden trough. The trough, in turn, feeds a narrow channel leading south toward the new reservoir. There is a large padlock set onto the top of the capstan to stop it from rotating.

The oxen have been eaten by the lizardfolk and their bones are found under some bushes 20 yards to the south. Anyone who makes a successful Knowledge (engineering) (DC 20) realizes that these pumps are designed to remove enormous quantities from the swamp's water table.

Trap: The padlock (Open Locks, DC 25) has been put onto the capstan to prevent it from being used. The twins Ronnie and Reggie, under Naamani's orders, have trapped the padlock with a series of poisoned fishhooks attached by a fine wire.

Poison Hook Trap: CR 2; +8 ranged (1) plus naga poison (1d8 Con/1d8 Con); Fort save resists (DC 17) Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

PCs receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their save against the poison due to its age (it's over a week old).

S7. WISHBONE TRAP (EL 1)

The path here is firmer and more recognizable as such. Large swamp trees overhang the path, which is littered with fallen leaves.

Trap: Beneath the leaves is a wishbone trap, consisting of two coiled ropes each attached to a particularly springy and resilient tree. This traps one rope on each of the victim's legs with the result that the unfortunate is ripped upwards between the two trees, which go in opposite directions.

Wishbone Trap: CR 1; 2d6 points of damage plus 1d6 points of subdual damage; Reflex save avoids (DC 25); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

If the trap is sprung, the noise from the trap (and probably the PC caught in it) results in an immediate roll on the "Random Swamp Encounters" table. The character is left suspended 10 feet above the swamp, 20 feet from the path and still in needs of rescue. This leads to the normal problems associated with "bogging" (see "Travel in the Swamp").

S8. BULRUSHES (EL 4)

The bulrushes on either side of the path are thick, lush, and tall. Their brown points sway in the breeze while dragonflies buzz lazily in the air.

The party has a slim chance of Spotting (DC 20) strands of web connecting some of the bulrushes together to form a "door-flap" to the lair of a monstrous spider.

Monstrous Trapdoor Spider, Huge: hp 55; *Monster Manual* 210.

Tactics: The spider attempts to surprise and then "net" a PC with its webbing, hoping to pull the tasty morsel back into its lair and then shut the door behind it. Opening the door to rescue a captured character requires a Strength check (DC 20). The lair is 20 feet across, consisting of reeds held together with webs. PCs can also chop through the wall (hardness 1, hp 16). If the spider doesn't snag a PC within the first 2 rounds of combat, it just charges the nearest character and uses its more conventional attacks until slain.

Treasure: The spider has some knick-knacks from past victims, including a *ring of sustenance*, 10 gp, and a black pearl (500 gp).

S9. STONE BRIDGE (EL 1)

At the east end of the swamp stands a gray, single-span stone bridge, its origins long forgotten. Beneath the bridge flows the river, which is narrower here and filled with yellow-and-white water crocuses and small fish that jump into the air, flashing silver in the sunlight.

The pool is the home of Ifirth the nixie. He dislikes visitors to his swamp and is always on the lookout for some dumb humanoids to serve him in some menial fashion or other.

Ifirth, Male Nixie: hp 3; **Monster Manual** 172.

Tactics: If the party crosses the bridge, Ifirth surfaces and attempts to *charm* whomever looks the strongest and most stupid. If the character succumbs to his charm, Ifirth invites the person in "for a cool refreshing dip." The *charmed* individual then climbs onto the bridge wall and jumps into the water below, probably sinking to the river's bottom. Once on the bottom, Ifirth casts *water breathing* on the PC and instructs the character to stay on the bottom. He then Hides and swims up to the surface to see what the funny humanoids are up to. After a couple of rounds, a successful Listen check (DC 12) reveals high-pitched giggling coming from a stand of cattails a few feet from the bridge, if the PCs don't spot Ifirth before then. The water beneath the bridge is 7 feet deep.

If the party captures Ifirth, or no one succumbs to his charm, he might speak to the party if they make a successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 15). He knows all about the peaceful lizardfolk, as well as that they serve a fearsome naga who has declared war on the villagers. He has also seen a robed human woman (Ssirine) by the strange capstan pump with a "funny little man."

Treasure: Under a small flat rock on the riverbank is Ifirth's treasure, a gray *bag of tricks*. A successful Search check (DC 15) is necessary to uncover it.

S10. BROKEN AXE CLAN VILLAGE (EL 7)

A small cluster of huts sits on the north bank of the Blackwater River. The huts are made of wood, with roofs constructed of woven bulrushes. Red fish have been left on wooden racks to dry in the sun, attached to the frame by sharp thorns. Forked fishing spears lean up against many of the huts. About 100 yards to the north you can see a lightning-blackened tree stump atop a large hillock that rises quite a bit above the waterline.

In the center of the village stands a shrine, composed of four axes arranged in a circle, their heads touching. Hanging from the axe heads are necklaces and other personal effects, as well as a smooth river stone bearing an inscription. The haft of each axe is broken to half its original length. Around the axes are four small fires burning aromatic leaves.

The inscription on the river rock is in Draconic, and it consists of a dedication to Semuanya on behalf of each of four recently killed clan members.

In the village live 10 lizardfolk males, 5 females, 5

children, and 4 eggs. All women and children are noncombatant and flee and hide in a corner of their huts when they see the party.

Lizardfolk (20): hp 11 each (for combatants, 5 each for noncombatants and juveniles); *Monster Manual* 128. *Note:* These lizardfolk carry longspears instead of greatclubs and javelins.

Tactics: When the party is first spotted, one of the male lizardfolk runs to the water, dives in, and can clearly be seen heading toward the burned-out tree to the north. Remaining male lizardfolk stay to defend the women and children, ferociously fighting to the death. They refuse to communicate with the party.

Development: If the PCs keep their distance from the village and indicate a desire to parley, one of the lizardfolk holds up his hand, gesturing for the PCs to stop and wait. He then turns and looks toward the blackened tree.

After a few minutes, the lizardfolk male who swam out to the hillock re-emerges and gestures toward the village. A pair of flat-bottomed river boats are brought out of one of the larger huts, and the lizardfolk beckon for the PCs to enter the boats and make their way to the tree. Still, none of the lizardfolk speak.

If the PCs agree to make the short trip in peace, proceed to "Naamani's Lair." The lizardfolk villager who swam to the tree earlier waits for the PCs' arrival, then leads them to meet with Naamani and Ssyrin (area **N6**). If the PCs begin attacking the denizens of Naamani's cave once they reach it, or if they arrive at the cave without alerting the Broken Axe Clan, proceed to area **N1** and proceed as described.

There is nothing else of interest in the village. If the party tries to set out for the tree stump overground from the south they quickly become bogged; a safe path is only available from the north.

The entrance to the naga's lair is under the charred tree; see "Naamani's Lair" and its accompanying map.

S11. A GNOME AWAY FROM HOME

As the party wanders along a length of path devoid of lizardfolk tracks, they come across a scene of violent death.

> Ahead on the path, lies a small humanoid, it's clothing tattered and ripped. The corpse is surrounded by insects and seems fairly fresh.

From a distance of 30 feet, a successful Spot or Wilderness Lore check (DC 20), reveals that the clothing on the body has been ripped by thorns, and many thorns can be seen in the fibers of the traveler's tunic.

The body is that of the gnome engineer Silas Gruecock, who fell victim to the tendriculos that lurks next to the path. Silas was heading back to the city but took a wrong turn and got lost.

The tendriculos has just digested Silas's pony, and Silas is to be the dessert. If anyone goes and examines the body, the tendriculos attacks. On the corpse is his report to an unspecified person showing the designs and description of the pumps that he has installed to entirely drain the swamp. In a small belt pouch are two rubies (200 gp each), as well as 53 gp and 21 sp.

Tendriculos: hp 94; *Monster Manual* 175.

Treasure: Scattered on the ground about the tendriculos is 70 gp and a gold bracelet (70 gp).

S12. THE BLACKENED STUMP

> Atop a small hillock, rising 20 feet above the level of the river is a single blackened tree stump, 6 feet tall and 2 feet in diameter.

The stump is only approachable from the west by land; all other routes require traversing terrain that results in the PCs becoming bogged (see "Travel in the Swamp") or having to make multiple Swim checks.

A Search check (DC 12) reveals that the stump is perfectly hollow. It leads down to the Cave of Naamani (area **N**) below. This is a secondary entrance to the cave. The real entrance lies beneath an overhang of roots (see area **N1**) and requires a Search check (DC 20) to find.

This passage is very narrow. Medium-size characters must make an Escape Artist check (DC 15) to wriggle through, and anything larger just can't fit. Small creatures can maneuver through the stump without difficulty.

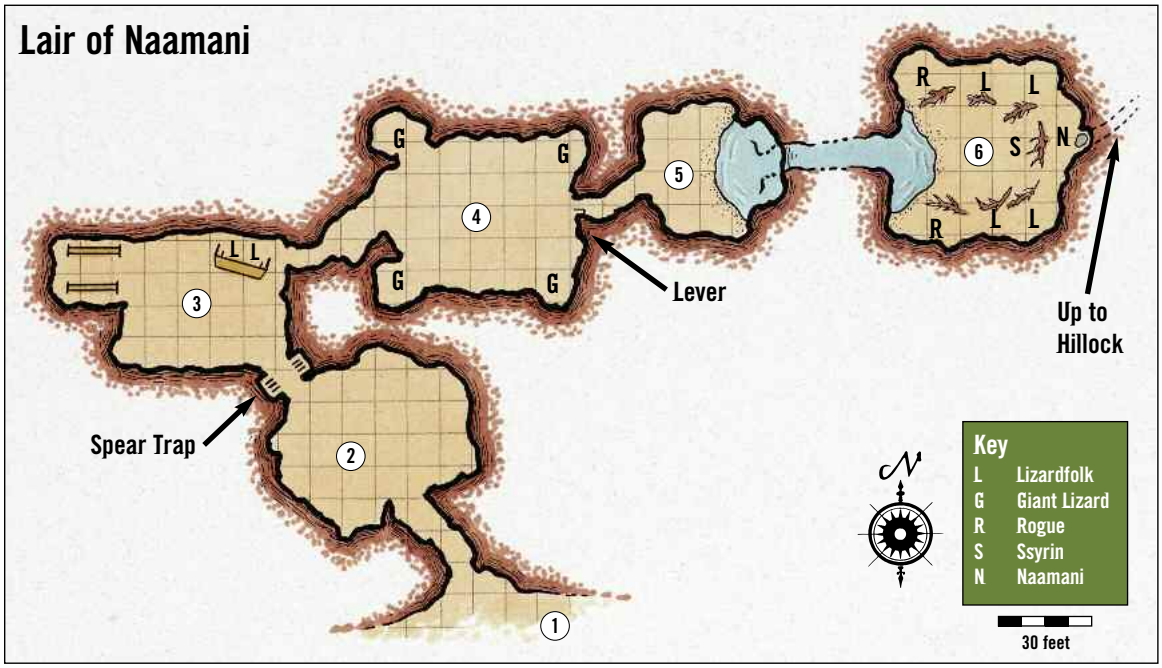
NAAMANI'S LAIR

Whether the party arrives here at the invitation of the lizardfolk or as an invading force, read or paraphrase the appropriate read-aloud text as the PCs enter each area. If they come in peace, they are led by a lizardfolk from the village. Otherwise, the denizens of the cave don't hesitate to attack to the utmost of their abilities.

Naamani and Ssyrin together are a nearly insurmountable pair for a 4th-level party. Try to convey to the PCs, if they haven't discovered it already, that the lizardfolk are peaceful in nature, as well as that the leaders of the Broken Axe Clan are angry and desperate to resolve the plight facing their tribe.

N1. ENTRANCE

> Just above the waterline, and below an overhang of black, twisted roots, is a well-hidden opening. Peering into the murky blackness, you can see that the



tunnel widens into an 8-foot-high tunnel that descends slightly. The roof of the tunnel is cluttered with taproots from the cypress trees above.

The floor of the tunnel is slippery wet clay. Characters who do not take precautions, such as using ropes or holding on to the hanging roots, need to make two Balance checks (DC 10) to remain upright the length of the passage. Falling means the character slides into area N2, taking 1d4 points of subdual damage, and possibly knocking characters ahead of him into the room, as well. PCs buffeted by sliding companions must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or also be knocked down into area **N2** and take 1d4 points of subdual damage.

The tunnel is totally dark, and you should ascertain the light sources used for those without darkvision. The tunnel winds north for 40 feet before opening into a large cavern (area **N2**).

N2. DARKMANTLE CAVERN (EL 5)

You've entered a cold, damp, 30-foot diameter cavern whose floor is a mass of puddles. The 20-foot-high ceiling is a mass of dangling roots from the cypress trees above. A pair of lizardfolk guards stand at a narrow exit in the northwestern corner

Creatures: Lurking on the ceiling of this chamber are four trained darkmantles.

Darkmantles (4): hp 8, 6, 6, 5; *Monster Manual* 39.

Lizardfolk (2): hp 12 each; *Monster Manual* 128. *Note:* These lizardfolk carry longspears instead of greatclubs or javelins.

Tactics: The darkmantles attack when the party enters unless the PCs are in the company of a Broken Axe Clan lizardfolk (the darkmantles recognize their masters). They use their darkness ability before joining melee. The lizardfolk wait at the exit to throw spears at any opponents who escape the darkness. Constricted PCs gain one-quarter cover from the darkmantles.

Development: If the darkmantles are defeated, surviving lizardfolk take a replacement longspear from the guardroom in area **N3** and retreat to area **N5** to mount a final defense of the cave.

N3. TUNNEL AND GUARDROOM

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs head toward area **N3**:

A narrow tunnel leads to the northwest into a larger chamber. Swamp water drips from the ceiling and pools on the muddy floor.

Trap (EL 2): The passage between areas **N2** and **N3** has a hidden surprise. Two banks of spears shoot from the west and east walls when someone steps on a pressure plate hidden beneath the muddy pool of water.

Spear Trap: CR 2; +8 melee (×2) (1d6 each); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 15).

The tunnel then opens up into the guardroom.

This area is obviously a guardroom, which leads to an alcove that holds weapon racks. In the northeastern corner, a tunnel leads east. In the center of the room is a stout table behind which crouch two lizardfolk who hold to fishing spears ready to throw.

Creatures (EL 2): The lizardfolk don't attack if the PCs are accompanied by a member of the Broken Axe clan. Otherwise, they fight to the death.

The lizardfolk gain one-half cover from the overturned table.

Lizardfolk (2): hp 12 each; *Monster Manual* 128. *Note:* These lizardfolk carry longspears instead of greatclubs or javelins.

The weapon racks hold fishing spears and great axes. Most of the hafts of the greataxes have been broken and then mended. A successful Craft (weaponsmith) check (DC 15) reveals that the weapons have been fixed within the last two months. A Search check (DC 18) uncovers a long-forgotten *+1 dagger* that fell behind one of the shelves.

N4. LIZARDS (EL 6)

The narrow, 5-foot-wide tunnel winds in a northeasterly direction, widens to 15 feet, and then opens into a large, roughly hewn chamber. The chamber is in total darkness save for a faint glow emanating from an opening in the eastern wall. The slight clink of chains can be heard from various parts of the room.

A successful Spot check (DC 20) reveals a large iron lever in the flickering torchlight, set back just inside the tunnel leading east.

Creatures: If the PCs have come to attack and been detected, which is likely, the lizardfolk have used the lever to release four giant lizards from alcoves set around the room. The lizards are hard to Spot in full light, let alone darkness, and only characters with darkvision or good light sources can spot the well-camouflaged reptiles.

Party members can run and grab the lever and pull the giant lizards back into their home positions in the corners of the chamber, but this requires a successful Strength check (DC 30) and two of the lizards can reach whoever is operating the lever.

Giant Lizards (4): hp 25, 22, 22, 18; *Monster Manual* 198.

N5. POOL ROOM

This natural chamber has a very high ceiling and is roughly semicircular. The eastern wall of the room is almost entirely dominated by a clear pool, lit by phosphorescent mosses that coat the slimy walls.

If any of the guards from area **N2** survived, they flee to this chamber after rearming themselves in area **N3**. They throw these at hostile PCs and then join melee with claws and bite. Lizardfolk in this room fight to the death.

Anyone investigating the pool can make a Search check (DC 15) to notice a faint glow emanating from under the water. If a character gets into the water, the glow of light from the east is immediately obvious.

The pool extends for 20 feet under a natural shelf of rock through a 5-foot diameter gap that emerges in Naamani's cave. Swimming through the gap is fairly easy (Swim, DC 12). Only one character at a time can fit through the narrow aperture.

N6. NAAMANI'S CAVE (EL 9)

Breaking the surface of the water, a large cave becomes visible. The walls of the cavern are thick with hanging vines, behind which you can make out humanoid shapes. Waiting for you on the beach is an enormous lizard man, easily 7 feet tall, holding a greataxe that glows with an eerie light in the gloomy cave. Behind him is a large, writhing serpentine shape that shimmers green in the light filtering in from an opening in the ceiling. The snake creature has a nightmarish mockery of a human head and it's forked tongue flickers between dripping fangs, tasting you on the air as orange hackles rise on the back of its head.

In the cave are two lizardfolk, as well as Ronnie and Reggie, Ssyrin, Ssparky, and Naamani. See **Group Tactics** and individual **Tactics** below.

Lizardfolk (2): hp 12 each; *Monster Manual* 128. *Note:* These lizardfolk carry longspears instead of greatclubs or javelins.

Ssparky the Shocker Lizard: hp 13; *Monster Manual* 164.

Ronnie and Reggie, Male Halfling Rog3 (2): CR 3; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 3d6+3; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 13, flat-footed 15); Atk +7* ranged (1d4+1*, darts) or +3 melee (1d6/crit 19–20, shortsword); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills: Balance +5, Climb +2, Craft (Trapmaking) +4, Disable Device +4, Hide +9, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +8, Search +4, Sense Motive +1, Spot +2, Tumble +9. *Feats:* Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot. *Includes bonus from Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: Each brother carries the same gear, which includes 10 darts, and 50 gp, but Reggie has a *potion of cat's grace* and Ronnie has a master key to Osborne Applebottom's house.

Ssyrin, Male Lizardfolk Bbn3: CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (reptilian, aquatic) (7 ft. tall); HD 2d8+8 plus 3d12+12; hp 58; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 17); Atk +9 melee (1d12+7/crit

19–20 ×3, *+1 keen greataxe*) and +6 melee (1d4+2, bite), or +8 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d4+2, bite); SA rage 1/day; SQ fast movement, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +7, Wilderness Lore +5, Listen +4, Jump +10, Swim +9, Intimidate +4, Intuit Direction +3, Craft (weaponsmith) +2. *Feats:* Multiattack, Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush.

Possessions: +1 keen greataxe, necklace of twenty freshwater pearls worth 300 gp.

Naamani, Water Naga: hp 59; *Monster Manual* 138.

Spells Known (6/7/7/4; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, mending, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*charm person, grease, protection from evil, ray of enfeeblement, sleep;* 2nd—*bull's strength, detect thoughts, hypnotic pattern;* 3rd—*gaseous form, tongues.*

Group Tactics: The overriding aim of the group is to minimize the deaths of the already dwindling clan members; they have suffered heavy losses lately and need time to rebuild. Their secondary, and almost as important, aim is to protect Naamani.

Lizardfolk Tactics: Both lizardfolk throw their spears before engaging in melee with their natural attacks. The lizardfolk each have one-quarter cover from the curtain of tree roots until they join the melee.

Ronnie's and Reggie's Tactics: The twins have a plentiful supply of darts, which they prefer to use over engaging in melee. The hanging roots provide them with one-quarter cover, as well, so they typically Hide in alternating rounds, and if successful, attack to get the benefit of their sneak attack damage. If they are reduced to fewer than half hit points, they throw down their weapons and surrender.

Ssparky's Tactics: As soon as any uninvited guests swim into Naamani's cave, Ssparky the shocker lizard attacks. He swims about the pool, and the conductivity of the water enables him to deliver his shocks without getting within 5 feet of the PCs, as would normally be required. In addition, every PC in the water takes the damage.

Ssyrin's Tactics: The clan leader rages and use his Improved Bull Rush feat to try to keep

a PC in the water so Ssparky can continue to shock him. If Naamani casts *grease*, he also uses bull rush attacks to try to keep PCs on the *greased* area. If more than one person confronts him, or someone makes a move to go after Naamani, he abandons this plan to engage in melee.

Naamani's Tactics: Naamani casts spells to aid her allies. The first spell she casts is *grease* on the area between herself and the pool (she has already cast *bull's strength* on Ssyrin). Her main aim is to try to ascertain whether the party would be potential allies against Osborne Applebottom. She uses *detect thoughts* to try to discern the group's motives and liberally uses Enchantment spells like *charm person, hypnotic pattern,* and *hold person* to capture opponents rather than slay them outright.

If the two lizardfolk die, or if the majority of the party is immobilized, Naamani rallies survivors to her and attempts to flee through the pool or up the roots onto the hillock outside. Naamani casts *gaseous form* and disappears through the hole in the ceiling. She then reforms and waits for the party to leave before returning to her cave.

Development: If the PCs approach Naamani peacefully, either with a Broken Axe clan guide or not, she uses her tongues spell to discuss a truce. She then describes the history of the situation, focusing on the attack at Harley's Mill and the ecological effects of the lowered water table. She offers a 1,000 gp freshwater pearl (see Treasure below) for the head of Osborne Applebottom. She also warn the PCs that Osborne has some sort of powerful ally who knows a great deal about the Broken Axe clan.

Treasure: Naamani's treasure consists of 1,000 gp pearl, 800 gp, and a *potion of spider climbing* that she keeps under a flat rock in the back of the cave. A successful Search check (DC 20) is sufficient to reveal this.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: If the party successfully negotiates with Naamani, give them full experience for all the denizens of area **N6** as if the PCs had defeated them in combat.

BACK TO TOWN

When the party returns to Orchard Meadows, they're probably going to want to see Osborne Applebottom, whether they think him guilty or not. If they come back for the reward and head to the Municipal Building, Cedric Thornton, the town clerk, directs them to Osborne's home, the renovated theater on the west end of town.

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs head toward Osborne's home:

> Dominating a leafy side street is a large cream-colored stone building. Approximately 50 feet tall, it has the word "THEATRE" chiseled into a stone sign above the door. The garden is full of bushes ornately trimmed into the shapes of woodland creatures. An impressive rose-covered trellis occupies the right side of the house and climbs up to a large picture window. Three large guard dogs patrol the walled garden. At the front of the house is a large, black wrought-iron gate with a bell-pull. At the rear of the house is a small wooden gate.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE (EL 8)

Both the front and rear gates have been designed to screech loudly when opened, serving as an advance warning system to Osborne's staff.

Creatures: The dogs growl loudly as soon as anyone approaches the gate. The dogs patrol at all times and have been trained to bark if anyone enters the garden. This wakes Osborne's henchmen, Simon and Adrian, who sleep in the servant's quarters.

Guard Dogs (2): hp 16, 14, 14; *Monster Manual* 196 (use riding dog stats).

Simon and Adrian are former adventuring companions hired to protect Osborne from the lizardfolk. They also took part in the ambush at Harley's Mill. Adrian poses as Osborne's cook; while he is actually a chef of great ability, he also specializes in fighting with a meat cleaver (treated as a short sword). The greedy Simon, posing as Osborne's butler, responds to one driving force—money. Simon and Adrian both have a key that opens all doors and windows in the house, except for Osborne's wall safe, of which they are unaware.

Simon, Male Human Rog4: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. tall), HD 4d6+8; hp 26; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (Dex, Dodge); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/crit 19–20, *+1 shortsword*); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL NE; SV Fort +3 Ref +7 Will +1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +8, Bluff +7, Climb +6, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +7, Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Open Locks +10, Search +6, Sense Motive +4, Spot +5, Tumble +9, Use Magic Device +7. *Feats:* Dodge, Mobility, Improved initiative.

Possessions: +1 short sword, potion of cure moderate wounds, leather armor (worn under his clothing), 20 pp, belt buckle inlaid with rubies (200 gp), master key to the house.

Adrian, Male Human Ftr4: CR 4, Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. tall), HD 4d10+12; hp 39; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 14); Atk +9 (meat

cleaver 1d6+6) AL NG; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +4*; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +8, Jump +7, Profession (Cook) +5, Swim +7. *Feats:* Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quickdraw, Weapon Focus (meat cleaver), Weapon Specialization (meat cleaver). *Includes Iron Will.

Possessions: meat cleaver (treat as short sword), studded leather armor (worn under his clothing), 20 gp, master key to the house.

If the party uses the bell, Simon comes to the front door and politely tells the PCs that the mayor is in council (daytime) or with a lady-friend (night). He's lying, so he'll need to make a Bluff check, opposed by the PCs' Sense Motive checks.

If the party's appearance or smell reveals that they have already been to the swamp, he lets the door close (and lock) behind him and engages the party in a conversation about their trip to the swamp. Meanwhile Adrian sneaks out the back door and skirts around to a position ready to set up a flanking situation with Simon.

Simon holds onto the dogs and invites the party to come into the garden to "discuss their findings." The gate is weighted to shut behind the party, and as soon as it does, Simon releases the dogs, and waits for Adrian to flank a PC before attacking himself.

Alternatively, if the characters decide to enter the house without permission, perhaps to do some snooping, the dogs attack as soon as any intruders are detected (remember that the dogs have scent, and the PCs likely smell like the swamp).

Tactics: The guard dogs have been trained to keep intruders away from the front door. They attack opponents at random as characters first enter the yard, but break off to pursue anyone who goes near the door. The dogs fight to the death.

Two rounds after sounding the alarm, the dogs are joined by Adrian, who runs through the front door, brandishing his meat cleaver and dressed in a chef's whites (with armor underneath). Adrian uses maximum Power Attack (+4 to damage, –4 to attack) initially, and then modifies it based on how easy his foes are to hit. Meanwhile, Simon moves around the side of the house to sneak attack party spellcasters from behind 1 round later.

Osborne Applebottom, Male Halfling Rog6: CR 6, Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 6d6+12; hp 43; Init +8; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 15, flat-footed 17); Atk +7 melee (1d6+4/crit 19–20, *+1 short sword*) or +9 ranged (1d6+2/crit ×3, masterwork mighty composite shortbow [+2]); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL CN; SV Fort +6 Ref +9 Will +3; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +7, Climb +11, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +7, Hide +13, Jump +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Open Locks +8, Pick Pockets +8, Read Lips +6, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +10, Tumble +13, Use Rope +5. *Feats:* Expertise, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: +1 short sword, +1 ring of protection, brooch of shielding (55), *Keoghtom's ointment* (2 applications), *dust of disappearance* (1 application), *potion of cure serious wounds,* masterwork mighty composite shortbow [+2] and 30 arrows, brass key (to the safe in area **O8**), master key to the house, masterwork thieves' tools.

Tactics: Once his henchmen occupy the PC's attention, Osborne silently opens the windows to his room (the runners are coated with soap) and fires arrows from his windows. The first round, the PCs should be totally caught off guard by Osborne's attack, making them susceptible to sneak attack damage. Osborne tries to snipe (imposing a –20 penalty to further Hide checks while he remains in the window firing arrows) to prolong the effectiveness of his sneak attacks. The window affords Osborne one-half cover, and because it protrudes from the front of the house and has three open windows, he can fire at all areas of the front of the building, even at people trying to open the front door.

Osborne has a *brooch of shielding* to protect against *magic missile* attacks. Arcane spellcasters are his primary targets, followed by clerics. If anyone climbs the rose trellis (see below) he fires arrows at them until they reach the **Trap** (see below). Note that climbing PCs don't get their Dexterity bonus to AC, so Osborne gets full sneak attack damage against such targets.

Development: Adrian and Simon fight until reduced to one-quarter their hit points before attempting to retreat to the back of the house where they use their master keys to unlock the back door and get into the house.

If anyone successfully climbs the trellis, Osborne squeaks in dismay and dives under his bed, where he squeezes through his escape hatch and into the theater (area **O1**). He climbs down the theater rigging to the stage, where he Hides behind the curtain and waits for a target to shoot with his bow. Once combat is joined, proceed to "The Great Escape."

The front door to the house is made of sturdy wood with a good lock.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Open Locks DC 25.

Both Simon and Adrian have a key. The back door is locked and has the same properties as the front door. All downstairs windows are locked and barred.

Window Bars: hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 24.

Osborne's House

Climbing to the second story is reasonably easy using the rose trellis (Climb, DC 10) that leads to Osborne's bedroom window.

Trap (EL 1): The trellis is rigged to break under the weight of climber who reaches a height of 20 feet. A successful Search check (DC 15) made while climbing reveals the trap. Once detected, it cannot be disarmed, but a clever climber can circumvent the trapped area with a successful extra Climb check (DC 12). In addition, a successful Reflex save (DC 20) made when the trellis breaks indicates the climber manages to latch on to a thick rose vine that deals 1d4 points of damage but prevents the fall. Climbing the sheer walls to pass the trap is difficult (DC 18).

Rose Trellis Trap: CR 1; 20-foot fall (2d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 20); Search (DC 15).

INSIDE THE HOUSE

Osborne has done what he can to preserve the feeling of the theater. He finds a certain irony in his choice of home in conjunction with the performance he put on to become mayor and work his scam in town.

O1. AUDITORIUM/BALLROOM (EL 6)

This auditorium has a 50-foot high painted ceiling and a well-polished dance floor. A stage rises 5 feet above the main floor on the east end of the room. The stage curtains are shut and its beautiful purple curtains depict the twin masks of Comedy and Tragedy. To your immediate left is a door, above which a sign reads "Ticket Office."

Anyone who enters the house probably steps on the welcome mat that tinkles a bell in Osborne's room. PCs can hear this with a successful Listen check (DC 25). A successful Search check (DC 15) in the entryway reveals a creaky board attached to a thin piece of twine. A Disable Device check (DC 12) is sufficient to remove Osborne's warning trick.

Anyone investigating the stage (area **O1a**) finds the lever used to open the curtains (Strength check, DC 10). They also find (Search, DC 12) a 3-foot square theatrical trapdoor in the stage that leads to the cellar (area **O11**).

The Great Escape: This is where Osborne makes his "final" stand. He is very familiar with the stage and its workings, and likes to employ dramatic tactics to try to intimidate his foes.

When the threat of melee combat is imminent, Osborne grabs a specially prepared rope near the edge of the stage. The rope is looped over a pulley attached to the ceiling high above. On its other end is a heavy sandbag. With a flourish of his sword, Osborne cuts the rope and zips up to a catwalk on the ceiling that runs from one end of the auditorium to the other, where he peppers the PCs with arrows from his shortbow.

If he runs out of ammunition or is dropped below half his hit points, Osborne grabs another rope and slide down to the stage and onto the trapdoor. There he shakes his fist angrily at the PCs, swears his revenge, then triggers the lever that opens the trapdoor into the cellar. After he drops through, the weighted trapdoor swings back into place. Osborne, meanwhile, scampers up the stairs into the storeroom (area **O6**), then into the kitchen (area **O5**) and out the back door.

It takes him 3 rounds to complete the maneuver: one to descend to the catwalk and trigger the trapdoor, one to run up the back stairs, and one to escape out the specially rigged back door (see area **O5**). Note that PCs can slow Osborne's progress if they close the doors

between areas **O5** and **O6**, which are usually intentionally left open.

O2. TICKET OFFICE

The former ticket office is now a waiting room for Osborne's callers. An oak-paneled door stands in the north wall and a wrought iron spiral staircase in the southwest corner leads up. A yellow and green striped chaise-lounge and a badly stuffed deer head spoil an otherwise beautiful room.

The room is unoccupied.

O3. DINING ROOM

This dining room contains a polished mahogany table and eight sturdy chairs. The table is set for three, all together at the northern end, with fine silver cutlery. A painting of Osborne as a chubby baby naked on a fur rug hangs over a stone fireplace. There is a small door in the north wall.

The table and chairs are heavy but valuable (200 gp for the set). The painting is poorly rendered and worthless except to the vain Osborne.

O4. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

This room contains two sets of double bunks, one set smaller than the other. The wall by the smaller bunks is festooned with crude etchings of halfling actresses in various states of undress. Two lockers stand beside the bunks.

The two small bunks have not been slept in since Naamani captured Ronnie and Reggie. The lockers contain only personal clothing and effects.

O5. KITCHEN

The kitchen is exceedingly clean and well stocked with gleaming copper pots hanging from hooks. A set of six meat cleavers is stuck into a block of wood mounted on the wall. A back door next to the sink leads to the back garden and there is a small door in the eastern wall.

The meat cleavers are balanced for combat as well as cooking and function as short swords. This is not apparent by looks alone, but any PC trained in the use of short swords who picks one up instantly recognizes its potential value as a weapon.

The back door has a special mechanism built into its frame that allows someone with knowledge of the secret catch to open or close the door as a free action. A successful Search check (DC 23) reveals the presence of the trigger.

O6. STOREROOM

The storeroom has shelves stocked with dry goods from floor to ceiling. Crude stone stairs on the eastern wall lead down.

Treasure: Adrian has hidden his personal stock of wealth here, which consists of a *potion of bull's strength* (he never had it identified) and 260 gp.

O7. GUEST BEDROOMS

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs open the door to one of these rooms:

An ornate theater box has been beautifully converted into a guest bedroom. The room has a four-poster bed with red satin sheets with gold thread trim. The bedroom also features a chest of drawers, a jug and bowl for washing, and a chamber pot under the bed. A picture window looks out directly onto the ballroom and stage.

Ssirine is staying in the middle of the three guest rooms. Her chamber has been slightly modified to suit her tastes. In addition to the text above, read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs enter her quarters:

This chamber is unique, even for this odd building. It features a sunken floor throughout that has been lined with white tiles. Standing water fills the floor to a depth of 2 inches. A beautiful human woman with black hair and blue-gray eyes the color of a clean river stands apprehensively behind the luxurious bed.

Creature: Ssirine is the offspring of a water elemental from the Blackwater River and a lizardfolk priestess of Semuanya. Abandoned by her parents, she was trained as a sorcerer by Naamani. She is ruthlessly ambitious and sought leadership of the clan and a return to its warlike ways. Shunned by the clan after trying to *charm* her way to power, she has recently been advising Osborne, and she took part in the ambush at Harley's Mill. She hates Osborne, but he has promised her control over what's left of the clan once the swamp is drained and Naamani defeated. She is claustrophobic and often walks through the orchards near the town disguised as a human. She likes to wet her body frequently and keeps her room well-filled thanks to Adrian, who is besotted with her.

The half-elemental is a template from *Manual of the Planes* (see page 189 for more information). The relevant information for the template as it applies to Ssirine is presented here.

Ssirine, Female Half-water Elemental/Half-lizardfolk Sor4: CR 7; Medium-size Outsider (aquatic, reptilian, water); HD 2d8+4 plus 4d4+8; hp 34; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 10, flat-footed 18); Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws), +3 melee (1d4+1, bite), or +4 ranged (1d8/crit 19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA spells, spell-like abilities; SQ immune to disease and water effects; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills: (12) Balance +5*, Concentration +9, Jump +8*, Spellcraft +6, Swim +10*. *Feats:* Blind-fight, Multiattack, Spell Focus (Enchantment). *Includes +4 racial bonus.

Spell-like Abilities: 1/day—*obscuring mist, fog cloud* (cast as a 4th-level sorcerer).

Spells Known (6/7/4; base save DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, mending, open/close, read magic;* 1st—*charm person*†, *magic missile, shield;* 2nd—*alter self.*

† Because of Spell Focus (Enchantment), the base DC for saves against these spells is 16 + spell level.

Possessions: bracers of armor +2, wand of Tasha's hideous laughter (9 charges), *wand of Melf's acid arrow* (4th level, 14 charges), *potion of endurance.*

Tactics: If alerted by the dogs barking or the bell ringing, Ssirine is well prepared if the PCs enter her room. She drinks her *potion of endurance,* casts *shield* on herself and stands behind the bed to give her one-quarter cover. She also casts *alter self* so she appears as a harmless looking human woman.

If the PCs are aggressive or ask too many questions about events in the town, Ssirine abandons the pretense of helplessness and attempts to *charm* the largest fighter in the party to protect her. If unsuccessful, she snarls, drops her *alter self* spell in an attempt to catch the PCs off guard, and uses her *fog cloud* spell-like ability to cover the room in mist. She prefers fighting in such conditions,

as they give her the opportunity to maximize the effectiveness of her Blind-fight feat (see the Player's Handbook, page 80).

Development: Ssirine fights until dropped to fewer than 10 hit points, at which point she casts obscuring mist on herself and flees. She heads toward the swamp, where, she dives into the river and attempts to swim downstream and away from Orchard Meadows . . . for now.

O8. OSBORNE'S STUDY

This is a fine study with an upholstered red chair and an untidy mahogany writing desk. Paintings cover the walls depicting halflings you assume are members of the Applebottom clan, due to their remarkable likenesses to Osborne himself.

Investigation of the paperwork strewn about the desk shows that Osborne has been neglecting his mayoral responsibilities of late. The desk has an unlocked top stationery drawer, and two locked drawers (Open Locks, DC 20). The first contains letters. Each is tied with a pink ribbon and comes from an actress in the city named Dolly.

A portrait of Osborne's mother hides a locked wall safe, whose key is in Osborne's money belt. A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals its presence.

Trap: The safe is trapped with a magic ward crafted by a wizard Osborne brought in secretly for just this purpose.

Electrified Wall Safe: CR 4; 20-ft. radius hemisphere (5d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 15); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 25).

The wall safe holds a few items of interest. Although it contain any valuables, it does hold the records of Osborne's land purchases and a detailed description from Silas Gruecock showing how the swamp is to be drained. Finally, a self-rendered portrait of Osborne making a rude gesture lies on top of the other papers—a last message to intruders who would disrupt his plans and try to make off with his ill-gotten gains.

Development: If the PCs fight their way past Adrian and Simon and enter the house through the front door, Osborne waits near the door to the study, listening for signs that the PCs are coming up the stairs. He hides behind the door frame to the room, and when he sees someone look around the corner, lets off a shot with his shortbow (probably gaining the benefit of his sneak attack damage). He then declares, "You'll never catch 'Slippery Applebottom'!" and scurries back into his bedroom, wriggles under his bed, and descends into the theater (area **O1**) through the small trapdoor located there. Using the theater rigging, he then descends to the stage proper, hides behind the curtain, and waits for another target. Once the PCs figure out where he's gone and head back to the theater, proceed to "The Great Escape."

If someone is in the theater and Osborne spots them as he prepares to descend to the stage, he uses his *dust of disappearance* to keep out of sight.

Iron Wall Safe: 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 20.

O9. OSBORNE'S ROOM

This bedroom has a large double bed next to a large bay window. Above you, a hatch hangs open, and a sturdy ladder hangs down.

Osborne has pulled the hatch open and the ladder down as a diversion. He knows that if the PCs win their way past Adrian, Simon, and Ssirine, they'll come here next, and he wants to buy himself time to prepare on the stage (see "The Great Escape").

If the PCs climb up the rose trellis outside the window, they see Osborne squirming under his bed, ruining his attempted misdirection. If the PCs enter through the front door, it takes them at least a couple of rounds to reach this room, during which time Osborne has scampered into his study and set up his little ambush. See the **Development** section of area **O8** for details.

Under the bed is a halfling-sized, unlocked trapdoor. Small PCs can get through without a problem, Medium-size PCs must make an Escape Artist check (DC 25) to get through, and larger PCs can't fit through at all.

O10. THE ATTIC

This dark, musty attic runs the whole length of the house and is stuffed to overflowing with props and scenery.

There are a hundred great hiding places here. In addition, a PC who makes a successful Search check (DC 13), can scrounge together enough useful materials to make a complete masterwork Disguise kit.

O11. THE CELLAR

The cellar contains many wine racks, as well as vegetable racks filled with potatoes and apples. The shadows are thick, as the room is lit only by a single guttering torch set along the middle of the west wall.

The room is kept deliberately dim in case Osborne has to get out of the house in a hurry. See "The Great Escape." Hidden in one of the bins of potatoes is the **Treasure**.

Treasure: The treasure consists of a tin box (marked "Property of O.M.T.C") that contains 200 pp, a *wand of knock* (19 charges), 500 gp, an emerald (200 gp), and a *potion of clairaudience/clairvoyance*, all within a *bag of holding* (Type 1).

CONCLUSION

If Osborne escapes, he flees to a nearby city and the protection of a thieves' guild. There he stays with his girlfriend, Dolly, while he plots another scheme. Note that Osborne probably gets away with the 100 pp promised the PCs as payment, as well as the rest of the town's profits for the year, so the town has nothing to reward the adventurers with.

If the party shows the evidence from the wall safe to the town council, they offer an extra reward of 500 gp to bring Osborne to justice. Without the evidence, the party needs help from Herman Ryder or Old Mother Grundy to convince the Council of Osborne's guilt. A trip to the pumps also convinces the council, in conjunction with the workers' story and Ssirine's body.

In almost any other circumstance, the party is unable to convince the council of Osborne's guilt. Furthermore, if the party "murders" Osborne or his retainers, or looted the house, Sheriff Svensen and his two deputies asks the PCs to leave town and never show their faces in Orchard Meadows again.

If one or both escapes, Ssirine and Osborne would both make good recurring villains. Although he doesn't hold a grudge, Osborne would certainly pursue another money-making scheme that could force his path to cross that of the PCs. Ssirine doesn't stop seething about losing the opportunity to gain control of the Broken Axe clan, and her machinations could even bring the PCs back to Orchard Meadows some day. Ω

DUNGEON 94 PREVIEWS

BLOODLINES

by Luke Johnson

The von Denn family has a long, illustrious history. Or does it? One Count is determined to discover the secrets of his family's past in the hopes of establishing a tie to the throne. These secrets lie in an ancient monastery that saw a massacre of horrendous proportions. Who knows what still lurks in the darkness within. "Bloodlines" is a D&D adventure for four 7th-level PCs but is adaptable for characters of levels 4–11.

BEYOND THE LIGHT OF REASON

by Caine Chandler

The city of Rutherton has known many years of peace due to the holy flame that shelters their small town. But now a violent storm has extinguished the brilliant flame and the city is threatened from a powerful foe. Can the PCs race into a deadly mine and rekindle the Light of Reason in time to stop this villain? And what waits for them there in the bowels of the mountain? Only a perilous journey will reveal any answers. "Beyond the Light of Reason" is a D&D adventure for four 13th-level PCs but is adaptable for characters of levels 9–17.

Jason A. Engle

THE JACKAL'S REDEMPTION

by Chad MacPhee and Greg Oppedisano

Even worldly adventurers fall prey to some of the oldest, vilest tricks. When the Jackal, the resident retired wizard of Halea's Reach, disappears along with his tower, his companions seek to discover his fate but never return. To top it off, strange, multiarmed creatures have been spotted abducting the locals, but no one can discover where they've gone. Who is behind these disappearances? Has the Jackal turned to darkness? More importantly, can he still find redemption? "The Jackal's Redemption" is a D&D adventure for four 9th-level PCs but is adaptable for characters of levels 7–14.

CRITICAL THREATS

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS
ARTWORK BY JASON A. ENGLE
CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

SADIE

Drider: CR 7; Large Aberration (8 feet long); HD 6d8+18; hp 47; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2/crit 19–20, masterwork short sword), +4 melee (1d6+1/crit 19–20, masterwork short sword), –1 melee (1d4+1, bite); or +6 ranged (1d6+4/crit ×3, *+1 mighty composite shortbow*); Face 10 ft. by 10 ft.; SA spells (as 6th-level sorcerer), spell-like abilities, poison; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; SR 14; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills: Climb +14, Concentration +10, Hide +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spellcraft +10, Spot +9. *Feats:* Ambidexterity, Combat Casting, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Drow, Undercommon.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4; base save DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*daze, flare, ghost sound, open/close, ray of frost, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*charm person, mage armor, shield, true strike;* 2nd—*invisibility, resist elements;* 3rd—*haste.*

Spell-like Abilities (base save DC = 13 + spell level): 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, faerie fire, levitate.*

SA—*Poison* (Ex): Bite; Fortitude save (DC 16) negates; initial and secondary damage 1d6 temporary Strength.

Possessions: +1 mighty composite shortbow [+2], 10 *+1 shock arrows, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of hiding, bracers of archery,* 2 masterwork short swords, 40 arrows, platinum spider headdress (1,800 gp), platinum spider ring set with eight tiny amethyst "eyes" (240 gp).

When a promising dark elf reaches 6th level, Lolth tests the individual's evil resolve. If the dark elf fails the test, Lolth transforms her into a half-spider aberration called a drider.

Sadie, a drow sorcerer, met an unkind fate by Lolth's hand. Her "test" was to gather her male concubines, journey far from her home in Erelhei Cinlu, and form an alliance with the white dragon Tothterax. The dragon was in no mood to parley and slew Sadie's followers. Sadie herself barely escaped with her life. For her failure, Sadie was transformed into a drider.

After months of exile, Sadie's *charmed* spies caught wind of a duergar plot to rid the Underdark of Tothterax and lay claim to her hoard. After Tothterax fell, Sadie negotiated with the evil dwarves—weakened from their battle with the dragon and eager to return to their lair—for custody of the dragon's eggs. They grudgingly complied.

Sadie believes she can win Lolth's favor and restore her true self by raising Tothterax's clutch of six white dragons as loyal servitors of the Spider Queen. Unfortunately, one of her long-time thralls—Skollac the troglodyte—has freed himself from the drider's control and now strives to ruin her plans by sending adventurers after her. Skollac and a few troglodyte toadies begin robbing gnome gem merchants in Underdark passages, provoking the gnomes to hire adventurers to deal with the problem.

APPEARANCE

Sadie retains some vestiges of her dark beauty and gender, but her bloated arachnoid form is no less horrifying. She has fierce fangs and claws, and her black body is adorned with jagged, electric blue stripes and slashes. She wears an elaborate spider headdress that hides most of her shock-white hair, and a ring signifying her past allegiance to House Tormtor of Erelhei Cinlu.

TACTICS

Sadie doesn't tolerate interlopers in her lair, but she loathes to lose her draconic brood in a bloody and ultimately pointless conflict. Instead, she uses a dim-witted dwarven thrall named Raskin to misdirect intruders. If he can't shoo them away, she sends a force of loyal albino kobolds—former toadies of Tothterax the White—to rid her of the heroes' presence.

If her lesser minions fail her, Sadie has no choice but to call upon Lolth to protect the dragons as she sends five of them into battle. She keeps one drake—Aexiliss, her favorite—by her side.

Before entering battle, and time permitting, Sadie casts *resist elements* (*cold*), *resist elements* (*fire*), and *resist elements* (*electricity*) on herself. She then casts *shield, mage armor,* and *invisibility.* Time permitting, she casts *haste* on three of the dragons she plans to send into battle. The fourth *haste* she keeps for herself, allowing her an extra partial action to cast either *true strike* (before firing an arrow) or *invisibility* (after her normal round of attacks).

Sadie uses her *+1 mighty composite shortbow* to attack opponents at range. The stalagmites encircling her lair have arrow slits; the drider can position herself inside one of the stalagmites and fire arrows from within, gaining nine-tenths cover.

Sadie melees with a single foe until she is reduced to half hit points, at which point she heads into her lair or flees by some other route. Confronted by multiple enemies, she prefers "flight" to "fight."

SADIE'S CAVERN

Sadie's cavern features a crown of six 20-foot-tall stalagmites rising from a mesa-like formation. A previous tenant used *stone shape* spells to dig caves into the stalagmites (see area **4**). In the center of this "crown" of stalactites is a shaft in the floor filled with webs (see area **5**). Below this shaft is a roughly spherical, 20-foot-diameter cave that serves as Sadie's retreat (see area **6**).

The cavern is not illuminated. The walls are rough and lined with natural ledges and outcroppings, making them relatively easy to climb (Climb DC 10).

1. Alarm System (EL 1). Patches of wild fungi grow around the damp perimeter of the cavern.

Creatures: Among the harmless fungi are three shriekers that wail when movement or light comes within 30 feet of them.

Shriekers (3): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 93.

2. Hovel and Fungi Garden (EL 1). A rocky "wart" in the floor of the cavern has a 10-foot-diameter cave carved into it. Near this protrusion is a neatly cultivated garden of edible fungi.

Creature: Reskin Stoneborn is a likeable dullard prone to interspersing long, thoughtful "ummms" into his speech. For reasons that escape him, he likes living in his squalid stone hovel and serving as the cavern's "major domo" (whatever that means).

Reskin emerges from his cave to confront intruders. He wears half-plate and carries a greataxe, but he is not a skilled combatant. When questioned about the cavern or its occupants, he regurgitates the words Sadie instructed him to utter: "Nothing here but me and them pesky reptiles!"

Reskin Stoneborn, Charmed Male Dwarf Com2: hp 8.

3. Servant Warrens (EL 4). The ceiling throughout this cave network is barely 6 feet high. The caves contain heaps of offal that serve as beds, bits of broken armor and weapons, and other refuse collected over the years.

Creatures: The twenty-four kobolds living here were exiled from their homeland because of their white scales. Some of the caves are also used by Skollac and other troglodyte servitors, but they are not present when the PCs arrive.

Albino Kobolds (24): hp 2 each; *Monster Manual* 123.

4. Sadie's Crown (EL 8). The entrances to the hollowed-out stalagmites all face inward, toward the central shaft (area **5**). Arrow slits in the walls peer outward toward the cavern.

Creatures: Each stalagmite houses a young white dragon (Aexiliss, Draxicoth, Gallyx, Jelryx, Rhaxivor, or Shollx). The dragons do not leave the cavern unless Sadie accompanies them and do not enter Sadie's retreat unless commanded to.

Young White Dragons (3 males, 3 females): hp 76 each; see *Monster Manual* 68–69.

Treasure: The stalagmite caves are piled with enough coins to keep the greedy dragons happy. For each dragon's lair, roll three times on the 3rd-level Coins chart (Table 7–4: Treasure in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

5. Web-filled Shaft. Webs fill this 10-foot-diameter shaft, providing 50% concealment but in no way impeding movement. They burn easily. The shaft descends 20 feet to the roof of area **6**.

6. Drider's Cyst. Hanging from the ceiling of this 20-foot-wide, spherical cave by web strands are the husks of a dozen coccooned humanoids—Sadie's food supply. Most of them are drained of blood. All are dead (unless you wish to plant a survivor here as a hook for another adventure). A tunnel leading from the cave provides Sadie with an "escape hatch." Sadie carries all of her valuable items and keeps no treasure here.

DEVELOPMENT

Although her hopes of earning Lolth's favor hinge on a solemn vow to raise the young white dragons as loyal minions of the Spider Queen, Sadie will not sacrifice her life for any of them. She would rather live as a drider than be dead.

If she escapes, Sadie uses her network of spies to gather information about the adventurers who ruined her plans. She trades her platinum headdress for the services of some Underdark monsters, then sends them after the heroes. Through her spies, she tries to learn the identities of anyone the heroes might care about—people she can terrorize or slay more easily than the adventurers themselves. Although she has no allies left in drow society, Sadie can play the drow for fools as need arises. Her agents spread word that a troupe of "surface-born spider-haters" have set out to destroy Erelhei Cinlu. Such a rumor is usually sufficient to bring well-armed drow to bear against the PCs. Ω

THE STORM LORD'S KEEP

BY JAMES WYATT

ARTWORK BY SCOTT SCHOMBURG • CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

Magic Items Monsters NPCs Objects Settlements Traps

"The Storm Lord's Keep" is a D&D adventure designed for four 21st-level characters using the rules presented in the Epic Level Handbook. While the Epic Level Handbook is necessary to run this adventure, you can scale it down for a lower-level, non-epic party using the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

Given the complex nature of the monsters and NPCs involved in the adventure, be sure to read through their statistics and familiarize yourself with their abilities and tactics before running the adventure. Doing this will speed up combat and keep the adventure running smoothly.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the high peaks where the Sulhaut Mountains meet the Crystalmists, far from human civilization, a clan of evil cloud giants has long made its home. Their ruler, a mighty giant sorcerer known only as the Storm Lord, reigns from a cloud castle that floats above the mountains, set atop a thunderhead that never ceases its storming.

The Storm Lord has stirred from his isolated domain, however, and led his giant clan to the southwestern reaches of the Yeomanry, the nearest region of human settlement. The Storm Lord's arrival has been terrible in each town in his path: First the cloud overshadows the town, pouring down rain until water runs down the streets. Thunder rolls so loudly as to deafen the people below—for which many are grateful, for it spares them the sound of the screams to come. Then the rain turns to acid, searing the flesh from anyone caught outside and pitting holes in solid rock. Lightning then sets the town ablaze, followed by hail and more driving rain. As the storm dies down to a mere raging thunderstorm, the Storm Lord's cavalry rides in—cloud giant fighters mounted upon enormous, ice-breathing birds. Nothing remains alive in these towns by the time the giants fly back to the Storm Lord's Keep.

Prompting the Storm Lord's assault is the recent loss of his daughter, who was slain by a band of adventurers. The Storm Lord now demands vengeance upon the humans who robbed him of his heir, and is hunting every member of the adventuring party who committed the murder. In his last assault, upon the town of Nathcael, he found and killed the last of the adventuring party but one—a bard named Elina, now in hiding in the small village of Ruvian, which is fated to become the Storm Lord's next target as well as the place where his rampage brings him into conflict with the player characters.

Unknown to Elina, the cleric in her party (a powerful servant of Wee Jas) cast *soul bind* on the dead giant, which has foiled all the Storm Lord's attempts to have his daughter returned to life. Elina carries the black sapphire that holds the giant's soul, believing it to be nothing more than a very valuable (20,000 gp) piece of treasure. Retrieving this gem is the Storm Lord's primary purpose, more important even than revenge.

The importance of the black sapphire goes deeper than parental love. For a thousand years, a cloud giant has carried the title of the Storm Lord and with it, a profound responsibility to guard a deep secret. Imprisoned deep within the cloud on which the Storm Lord's keep is built, a chichimec is imprisoned, the unwanted offspring of Phaulkon (a deity of air in the Greyhawk world; substitute another air or storm deity as appropriate to your campaign). Phaulkon constructed the prison and charged the first Storm Lord to guard it and keep it secured for all eternity. For one thousand years, the Storm Lords have fulfilled that oath, passing the title and the office down to their children.

For the current Storm Lord, then, retrieving his daughter from her soul's imprisonment is a sacred responsibility as well as a personally important quest. Should he die before he can restore her to life, the prison will burst open and the chichimec emerge, bringing destruction to the surrounding land and shame to Phaulkon.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure has three major sections. In the Prelude, the characters find themselves in or near Ruvian just as the Storm Lord launches his assault on the small village. The characters' challenge here is to provide enough resistance to cause the Storm Lord to call off the attack.

Next, in the Interlude, the last surviving member of the adventuring party that killed the Storm Lord's daughter tells her story. She explains that she escaped from Nathcael, the last town obliterated by the giants, and helped the residents of Ruvian try to prepare for the Storm Lord's assault. A bard of considerable renown in the Yeomanry, this Elina has a reputation for telling unbelievable stories—but on the other hand, she also possesses such a breadth of knowledge that the background information she offers about the Storm Lord rings true. She gives them enough information to allow them to approach the Storm Lord's Keep.

The third and main section of the adventure involves the characters' journey to the keep, including their encounters beneath and atop the massive thunderhead that houses it. In addition to the Storm Lord's giant vassals, the characters must contend with cloud worms—incorporeal relatives of the purple worm whose bodies are laced with powerful electrical charges. The various sections of the keep offer a traditional dungeon crawl in an unusual location atop a thunderhead. To conclude the adventure, the characters can confront the Storm Lord and resolve the situation—either by destroying him or by finding some way to convince the Storm Lord to cease his attacks.

PLAYERS' BACKGROUND

As Dungeon Master, your task is simply to bring the player characters to Ruvian. Once they are there, unfolding events should draw them into the adventure quite smoothly. Ideally, their reason for being there should make sense in the context of their recent adventures or personal plans: They could be passing through on their way to another location, returning from an expedition to the south, or looking for territory in which to establish a stronghold. You could also lure them to the area with rumors of the terrible events occurring there, particularly if they are flushed with their recent accomplishments and actively seeking out a way to flex their newfound epic muscle.

Once the characters have made their way to Ruvian, begin the adventure with the read-aloud text below.

> Since your arrival in this region of simple villages and rolling farmland, some disturbing rumors have reached your ears: whispers of entire towns obliterated during violent thunderstorms. In a land where farmers normally offer daily prayers for rain, fearful eyes are cast to the skies as dark clouds roll in quickly from the north. The latest stop on your travels, the small village of Ruvian welcomes you into its midst, but looks as if it's readying for war—no farmers work the outlying fields, a nervous clutch of militia members guards each road into the village center, and a watchtower has been erected near the northern edge of the town, evidently in haste. To all appearances, the little village is expecting a full-scale invasion in the immediate future.
>
> Almost as soon as you enter the village, a rumble of thunder sounds from the north, and the rain begins.

PRELUDE: THE BATTLE FOR RUVIAN

An adventure begins well when it begins with fast and furious action. Allow the characters just enough time to get a sense of the town's layout and existing defenses before beginning the effects of the storm of vengeance (see "The Breaking Storm," below).

Ruvian is a village with little in the way of established defenses. Even with Elina's advance warning and description of what happened in Nathcael, the village could do little to prepare for the Storm Lord's arrival. The militia and town guards total forty-three men and women, all of them 1st level—hardly a match for even one of the Storm Lord's cavalry riders and all doomed to die in the acid rain or hailstones of the *storm of vengeance*. Most of Ruvian's adult citizens own some armor and a simple weapon, but few are the least bit effective in combat, and none hold a candle to the PCs' might.

♛ **Ruvian (village):** Nonstandard; AL LN; 200 gp limit; Assets 7,200; Population 721; Isolated (human 96%, halfling 2%, elf 1%, other races 1%).

Authority Figure: Speaker Dardan Kemmel, male human Ftr5.

Important Characters: Grentham, male human War2 (Captain of the Guard); Jhamma, female dwarf Pal1; Heger, male human Rog4/Exp1 (retired adventurer); Anasta, female elf Wiz3; Karash, male human Sor3;

Thonni, female human Com9 (battle-hardened farmer); Shorrik, male human Exp7 (tough blacksmith).

Other: Town Guards, War1 (7); Militia, War1 (27) and Com1 (9); Brd2; Brd1 (2); Ftr2 (2); Ftr1 (4); Mnk2; Mnk1 (2); Rgr2; Rgr1 (2); Rog2 (2); Rog1 (4); Sor1 (2); Wiz1 (2); Adp3; Adp1 (3); Ari1 (3); Com4 (2); Com2 (4); Com1 (618); Exp3 (2); Exp1 (20).

Ruvian is a small village in a normally peaceful, rural area. Its only "fortification" is a rickety wooden watchtower erected—as it appears—in considerable haste. Its wooden walls are 6 inches thick, giving them 60 hit points (with a hardness of 5) per 10 foot by 10 foot surface area. Dealing 60 hit points to any part of the tower makes it collapse because of its hasty construction.

When the characters arrive in the village, Speaker Dardan Kemmel (male human Ftr5, hp 43), Grentham (captain of the guard—male human War2, hp 11), Jhamma (female dwarf Pal1, hp 10), Karash (male human Sor3, hp 9), Thuin and Dharv (both male human 2nd-level fighters, hp 15, 16), and three members of the town guard (male and female human War1, hp 5 each) are standing atop the tower, watching the approaching storm for any hint of the assault to come.

The other four members of the town guard are stationed at the head of four small squads of militia members positioned at the cardinal points of the village center. The group at the west point is positioned just off the bridge and includes a town guard (War1, hp 9) and nine militia members (War1, hp 5 each). The group at the south point is closest to the center of the village and includes a town guard (War1, hp 9) and nine militia members (six War1, hp 5 and three Com1, hp 3). The group at the east point includes a town guard (War1, hp 8) and nine militia members (six War1, hp 5 and three Com1, hp 3). The group at the north point is at the foot of the watchtower and includes a town guard (War1, hp 6) and nine militia members (six War1, hp 5 and three Com1, hp 3). Though they are not militia members, a few other residents of Ruvian consider themselves up to the task of defending it and are standing with the militia at the north point. These additions are Heger (male human Rog4/Exp1, hp 18), Anasta (female elf Wiz3, hp 6) and

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

Though this adventure is designed to make use of the rules in the *Epic Level Handbook* and give fledgling epic-level characters a taste of what lies before them, it is adaptable for use with characters below 20th level. Because the "hook" for the adventure is the possible destruction of an entire village, and a key player in that destruction is the *storm of vengeance* spell, it is not recommended that characters lower than 17th level attempt the adventure.

For characters of any level from 17th to high epic levels, much of the work of scaling the adventure can be handled by adjusting the character levels of the giant adversaries. The Storm Lord should have a CR five higher than the average character level. The white roc riders should have a CR four lower than the average character level. Even for 17th-level PCs, the CR 11 white rocs are hardly worth calculating in the encounter level when they appear. The Thunder Champion should have a CR two higher than the average party level.

All the giant NPCs are created using the rules in the *Epic Level Handbook,* and they are all epic-level NPCs even if the total of their class levels and their giant Hit Dice is less than 21, because cloud giants have a level adjustment of +23. This means, for purposes of adjusting their character levels, that they gain a +1 epic attack bonus per two levels above 19th and a +1 epic save bonus per two levels above 20th, in lieu of their normal class-based attack and save progression.

Only a few monsters without class levels appear in the adventure. For lower-level characters, reduce the number of thunder worms encountered on the thunderhead. For higher-level characters, you can increase the numbers, advance them according to the monster advancement rules in the *Monster Manual,* or both.

If you are not using the *Epic Level Handbook* and are running the adventure for 17th- to 20th-level characters, replace Thunder, the force dragon in the Great Tower, with a white dragon of an appropriate CR (equal or nearly equal to the party's average level). For higher-level characters, advance the force dragon to an older age category, or simply give it additional Hit Dice if the characters are lower than 25th level (32 HD for 22nd-level characters, 33 HD for 23rd-level characters, or 34 HD for 24th-level characters).

For lower-level characters, replace the mithral golems at the Great Gate with a pair of 36-HD iron golems. For higher-level characters, use more mithral golems (CR 21), one or more stone colossi (CR 24), one or more adamantine golems (CR 25), one or more flesh colossi (CR 27), or one or more iron colossi (CR 33).

Replacing the chichimec in the climactic encounter is difficult. If the characters are 17th–20th level and you do have access to the creature's statistics in the *Epic Level Handbook,* use it as written (but give the characters a few breaks if they need them—don't allow it time to summon three elementals, for example). If you do not have access to the chichimec statistics, replace it with a titan (CR 21), tarrasque (CR 20), or violently insane solar (CR 19). If the characters are higher than 21st level, use a different abomination from the *Epic Level Handbook*. In any case, it will probably not be possible to match the imprisoned creature to the storm theme of the adventure, but matching it to the characters' abilities is more important.

her two apprentices (male and female human Wiz1, hp 3 each), Thonni (female human Com9, hp 39), and Shorrik the Smith (male human Exp7, hp 35).

The remaining folk of Ruvian, warned by Speaker Kemmel, cower in their homes as the storm approaches. Fully 612 of the village's 721 people live outside the village center anyway, and these farmers and their families hide in their root cellars, barns, or homes when the first thunderclap sounds, so they're out of sight when the characters arrive. The watchers on the tower and at the outskirts of the village center account for fifty-five more villagers. The remaining fifty-four people are hiding in buildings within the village center: forty-one in the Speakers' Hall and the rest in their homes or businesses.

The bard Elina—who brought both word of the Storm Lord's approach and the Storm Lord's wrath on Ruvian—is hiding with the villagers in the Speakers' Hall. If she survives, the player characters encounter her in the Interlude.

THE BREAKING STORM (EL 21)

A deafening thunderclap issues from the storm cloud above the village, sending nearby villagers to the ground with their hands clutched to their ears.

Before the characters have had time to work out an elaborate plan, the storm breaks—more specifically, the Storm Lord uses the magic of his spectacular keep to create a *storm of vengeance*. The spell effect (a 360-foot radius cylinder) covers the entire village center and reaches up three-quarters of a mile to the thunderhead above. As described in the *Player's Handbook*, the spell effect begins with a deafening thunderclap: All characters in the village center must make a Fortitude save (DC 23) or be deafened for 1d4 × 10 minutes. Of the fifty-five villagers exposed to the storm, only Speaker Kemmel and Jhamma make successful saves. The fifty-four villagers hiding in buildings within the spell's effect gain no protection from their cover, and they are all deafened.

In addition to the magical effects of the storm, a full-blown thunderstorm accompanied by severe winds is raging beneath the Storm Lord's keep. The effects of severe winds (31–50 mph) and thunderstorms are detailed in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Note particularly that Medium-size creatures have difficulty flying in severe winds. They must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) each round or be blown back 1d6×10 feet in the direction of the winds. This saving throw is trivial for most epic-level characters, but they still fail automatically on a natural 1. Ranged attacks suffer a –4 penalty (except for siege weapons, including rocks thrown by giants), visibility is reduced by three quarters, and characters suffer a –8 penalty to all Spot, Search, and Listen checks.

After describing the effects of the deafening thunderclaps, allow characters to make Spellcraft checks (DC 29) to identify the *storm of vengeance* spell from its effects. Players familiar with the spell might recognize it and use that knowledge, which is fine. In addition, allow characters a chance to notice the magical sensor of a *clairvoyance* spell cast by the Storm Lord to get a visual read on Ruvian's defenders. A character with *detect scrying* active automatically notices the sensor, while other characters can make Scry or Intelligence checks (DC 20) to notice the invisible sensor. Finally, ask the players to roll initiative and resolve their actions for the first round of the spell effect.

In the second round, the rain of the thunderstorm briefly turns to acid. This takes place at the start of the round, before any characters act. Any character without acid resistance or cover from the storm suffers 1d6 points of acid damage. The guards and militia members who are 1st-level warriors (with 5 hit points) all fall to 2 hit points (taking an average 3 points of damage), while the nine 1st-level commoners in the militia (3 hit points), as well as Anasta's apprentices, drop to 0 and are disabled. NPCs inside buildings are unaffected by the acid. If the characters successfully dispelled the Storm Lord's *clairvoyance,* he casts it again at the beginning of this round, allowing them another chance to detect and dispel it.

In the third round, six *lightning bolts* strike targets in the village. If the characters successfully *dispelled* the Storm Lord's *clairvoyance,* he casts it again at the beginning of this round, and uses it to target them with the *lightning bolts.* Recognizing a true threat, he directs all six bolts at them rather than any of the other defenders of the town. Each bolt deals 10d6 points of electricity damage, but allows a Reflex save (DC 23) for half damage.s

In the fourth round, hailstorms rain down in the entire area of the storm, dealing 5d6 points of damage (with no saving throw) to every character who does not have cover from the storm. This kills almost every NPC who is still exposed to the storm. Speaker Kemmel and Grentham, along with the hardy Thonni and Shorrik the Smith, can weather the hailstones with plenty of hit points left. Jhamma, Karash, Thuin, Dharv, and the town guard at the south point survive the (average) 15 points of damage but are dying (between –2 and –9), and Thuin and the south guard (both at –9) will die the next round. The remaining NPCs, unless they have taken cover—the other six-town guards, all thirty-six members of the militia, Anasta, and her apprentices—all die.

Stopping the Storm: At any point during the manifestation of the *storm of vengeance,* the characters can try to stop the effect. An *antimagic field* protects everyone in its radius from the magical effects of the storm (but not the ordinary thunderstorm), which could certainly help the player characters but is unlikely to cover a large enough area to aid the townsfolk. A *greater dispelling* has a chance to end the *storm of vengeance,* provided it is cast within range of the portion of the thunderhead that is the spell's effect (not simply the rain, hail, or other manifestations of the spell) and targets the spell effect specifically. The *storm of vengeance* originates roughly three-quarters of a mile (about 4,000 feet) above the ground, so a *greater dispelling* cannot reach its target if cast from the ground (except by a 390th-level caster—or a 190th-level caster with Enlarge Spell!). The cloud's caster level is 20, meaning that a 21st-level caster (rolling 1d20+20) can dispel the effect on a roll of 11 or better. If the characters successfully dispel the *storm of vengeance,* the thunderstorm continues. The Storm Lord then targets them with the *call lightning* power of the magic cloud and immediately sends his cavalry to attack them and raze the town.

Ad-Hoc XP Award: Treat the *storm of vengeance* as a CR 21 encounter, since it involves protecting the villagers from the effects of this spell rather than combating the spellcaster. If the characters dispel the spell without any fatalities among the villagers, award them full experience points for the encounter. If they dispel it after it has claimed some lives but before it runs its course, award them 50% of the normal experience award. If they simply weather the storm, at the cost of villagers' lives, award them only 10% of the normal award.

THE WINGS OF THE STORM

As soon as the damaging effects of the *storm of vengeance* are finished—either after the hailstones have struck or after the characters have dispelled the effect—the Storm Lord sends forth three wings of white roc riders to assault the village from three different directions. Each wing consists of four cloud giant fighters, each mounted upon a white roc (half white dragon and half roc). One additional white roc rider circles above the village, supervising the assault and blowing orders on a massive horn. This is the Thunder Champion, a storm giant blackguard who serves as the Storm Lord's lieutenant.

All the white roc riders (including the Thunder Champion) drank *potions of fly* before descending to the village. This keeps them safe from falling in case their mounts are killed, and is a standard precaution for these riders. In addition, each rider carries an extra potion to cover the worst possibility: their mounts killed and their *potions of fly* dispelled. As a last resort, all cloud giants have the spell-like ability to *levitate,* but

the severe limitations on mobility while levitating make this a viable option only as an alternative to certain death.

A rider who is dismounted or whose white roc dies continues to fight, flying thanks to the potion (with better speed maneuverability, to boot), and switching to his flail instead of his lance. If his potion is *dispelled* and he is force to drink his backup potion, he retreats immediately to the Storm Lord's keep. A white roc whose rider dies retreats immediately to the aerie at Stair's End.

FIRST WING (EL 21)

Four enormous shapes descend out of the clouds toward you—apparently enormous birds, glistening white in the light from a nearby lightning strike, with huge riders astride their backs.

Creatures: The white roc riders are cloud giant fighters clad in full plate armor, so it is hard to identify them as anything but 18-foot-tall humanoids. They carry heavy lances and shields. The white rocs are snowy white, eaglelike birds with 120-foot wingspans, about 60 feet from beak to tail. Up close, characters can tell that their heads and shoulders are covered with thick white scales, but this is the only hint of their draconic heritage.

White Roc Riders (4): hp 331, 318, 330, 327; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

White Rocs (4): hp 249, 269, 268, 274; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

Tactics: One wing (four giants and four white rocs) concentrates its efforts upon the PCs, flying in to surround them, then attacking with Ride-By Attack (and Flyby Attacks from the white rocs themselves). If the characters are spread around the village, this wing targets the characters closest to the watchtower on the north end of the village center. Gargantuan creatures like the white rocs have no trouble flying in the storm, except for visibility, while Medium-size creatures must continue to make saving throws each round.

Development: Keep track of how many rounds the characters spend in combat with the first wing, since that might indicate how much damage the other two wings deal to the village before the characters stop them.

TWO WINGS (EL 23)

Read this text if the characters become aware of the other wings either because the PCs are spread out around the village (and thus not all targeted by the first wing), because one of them (with a very high Spot score) is looking around the rest of the village while the first wing is attacking the characters, or because they have finished with the first wing and are moving to defend the rest of the village.

Eight more enormous white birds with giant riders are swooping over the village, hurling rocks to smash buildings below and apparently searching for any survivors of the storm.

Creatures: These riders and their mounts are physically indistinguishable from the first wing.

White Roc Riders (8): hp 325, 324, 313, 321, 322, 314, 309, 310; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

White Rocs (8): hp 289, 271, 265, 248, 259, 290, 253, 276; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

Tactics: The remaining two wings (eight storm giants and eight white rocs) ignore the PCs until they make themselves a nuisance, focusing instead on their orders to slay every living thing remaining in the village. They fly into the village from different directions (one focusing on the village center, the other circling the outlying farms, which were spared the effects of the *storm of vengeance*). The riders hurl boulders at buildings while the mounts snatch any living creature they see in their claws and then drop them from a height.

Each round the two wings spend in their depredations, each giant sends a rock through the roof of one building. Every 3 rounds, a giant kills 1d8 people it finds in a home, business, barn, or cellar—either in the village center or on an outlying farm (50% chance of either). After 2d4 rounds, one of the giants strikes the Speakers Hall. The result is similar to a human kicking over an anthill, as people run wildly through the village in a panic. After this point, the wing in the village center kills 4d4 villagers each round until no one is left alive there. If the characters are still fighting the first wing at this point, the giants' reinforcements arrive. With no villagers left to slaughter in the village center, the wing responsible for that territory moves to help their allies against the PCs.

Development: If the characters defeat the wing sent to attack them and attack a second wing, the last wing immediately joins the battle. When only four giants remain, however, the Thunder Champion signals a retreat on his mighty horn, summoning the remaining giants to stand with him in the defense of the Storm Lord's keep.

If the Speakers Hall is hit by a boulder, Elina hides in the wreckage. She survives this way unless all the other villagers in the village center die—the fifty-four who were in hiding plus however many survived the *storm of vengeance* (possibly only four more).

THE THUNDER CHAMPION (EL 23–24)

If the characters leave the village's defense and approach the Storm Lord's cloud, the Thunder Champion flies to intercept them. If they defeat two of the wings, he calls the third to retreat, then rallies them to his position just beneath the cloud, again waiting to intercept the characters when they approach the keep. With an intact wing of white roc riders, the Thunder Champion is Encounter Level 24.

Creatures: The thunder champion is noticeably larger than the other riders, about 21 feet tall. His shining white armor is decorated with images of lightning, and he carries a tremendous greatsword rather than a lance and shield. He generally initiates combat with his *chain lightning* spell-like ability.

The Thunder Champion, Male Storm Giant Blk10: CR 23; Huge Giant (electricity); HD 19d8+152 (storm giant) plus 10d10+80 (Blk); hp 376; Init +1; Spd 40 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 36 (touch 11, flat-footed 35); Atk +40/+35/+30/+25 melee (4d6+26/19–20/decapitates, gargantuan *+4 vorpal greatsword*); or +23/+18/+13/+8 ranged (2d8+19/×3, gargantuan *+2 mighty composite longbow* [*+15*] with *+2 arrows*); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.; SA spell-like abilities, poison use, aura of despair, smite good 1/day (+5 attack, +10 damage), sneak attack +3d6, rebuke undead 7/day (as Clr8); SQ electricity immunity, rock catching, freedom of movement, water breathing, detect good, dark blessing; AL CE; SV Fort +25, Ref +11, Will +14; Str 40, Dex 12, Con 27, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 20.

Skills: Concentration +24, Hide –3, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perform (flute) +6, Ride (white roc) +21, Spot +9; *Feats:* Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Epic Feats: Epic Weapon Focus (greatsword), Unholy Strike.

Spell-Like Abilities: Once per day a storm giant can *call lightning* as a 15th-level druid and use *chain lighting* as a 15th-level sorcerer. Twice per day a storm giant can *control weather* as a 20th-level druid and *levitate* as a 20th-level sorcerer. Save DC is 15 + spell level.

SA—Aura of Despair (Su): A blackguard radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet of him to suffer a –2 morale penalty on all saving throws.

SA—Rock Catching (Ex): A storm giant can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would normally be hit by a rock can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium-size one, and 25 for a Large one. (If the projectile has a magical bonus to attack, the DC increases by that amount.) The giant must be ready for and aware of the attack.

SQ—Freedom of Movement (Su): Storm giants continuously have *freedom of movement* as the spell.

SQ—Water Breathing (Ex): Storm giants can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use their spell-like abilities while submerged.

Blackguard Spells Prepared (3/3/3/2; base DC 14 + spell level): 1st—*cure light wounds, doom, inflict light wounds*; 2nd—*bull's strength, death knell, shatter*; 3rd—*contagion, cure serious wounds, inflict serious wounds*; 4th—*cure critical wounds, inflict critical wounds.*

Possessions: +5 heavy fortification full plate, gargantuan +4 vorpal greatsword, gargantuan +2 mighty composite longbow [+15] with 50 *+2 arrows, ring of protection* +2, 2 *potions of fly* (1 already used), *horn of sounding* (see the "New Magic Items" sidebar on page 88).

White Roc: hp 294; see statistics on page 100.

Development: The Thunder Champion fights hard, but flees melee if his life is seriously threatened. Generally, he flees first and casts *cure critical wounds* second, rather than the other way around. If he survives this encounter, the characters encounter him again in the Lower Keep (area **L6**).

AFTERMATH

If the characters kill or drive off all three wings of white roc riders, the village begins to collect itself and (assuming the characters' victory was not completely one-sided) mourn its dead. The thunderstorm continues, however, and the massive thunderhead above does not seem to move past. The villagers certainly regard the characters as great heroes, although the extent of their admiration depends directly on how much the characters were able to reduce the village's losses.

If the characters want it, allow them a little time—a couple hours at most—to collect themselves, help townspeople, or do whatever they desire before moving on to the next part of the adventure.

INTERLUDE: THE BARD'S TALE

If Elina survived the assault on the village, she seeks the characters out soon after the white roc riders are gone. If not, some survivor who heard Elina's tale when she arrived in Ruvian approaches the characters to repeat the bard's story. You can read the boxed text exactly as presented if Elina is telling her own tale, or modify it as appropriate if someone else is telling the tale. You should also feel free to present it in a more conversational manner, allowing the characters to ask questions as the bard speaks.

Elina is an unexceptional half-elf bard of 13th level (use the table-based NPC bard from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for her statistics, if necessary). She has a

round face, dark hair tied in an unkempt ponytail, and sad eyes, and her clothes are worn almost ragged. She begins her encounter with the characters by asking their names and some history of their deeds, so that she can properly tell the tale of the Battle for Ruvian and the deeds of these epic heroes. She gives her name only if asked, and is obviously hesitant to begin her tale, but eventually resigns herself to the necessity with a heavy sigh.

"I expect you know that Ruvian is not the first village to feel the Storm Lord's wrath. No, not the first—though it is the first to survive it. At least for now," she adds with a glance upward toward the ever-present thunderhead.

"Rumors have been spreading like plague around here for weeks, and I suppose I'm at least partly to blame for those rumors. It was I who came to Ruvian, hoping to warn the Speaker and get the people into hiding before he came, telling them all the story of what I saw at Nathcael. Thanks to you, I have now escaped twice from the Storm Lord's fury, and I hope that you can stop him before he lashes out again.

"The Storm Lord, as you might have guessed, is a mighty cloud giant sorcerer whose keep is built on that thundercloud," she continues, again gesturing vaguely upward. "A giant called the Storm Lord has ruled a kingdom of giants in the distant mountains for centuries, mostly staying far from human civilization. There are tales—ancient and dim to human memory—of cloud giant traders visiting the great ancient cities now buried in the Sea of Dust, but that was a thousand years ago, and the cloud giants have scarcely been seen since those cities fell. Some of those ancient tales speak of a Storm Lord, but I do not know whether it is the same, ancient giant who troubles us now, or simply the latest giant to bear that title.

"Three weeks ago, the Storm Lord steered his castle out of the mountains and began this wild rampage. I believe that he has attacked seven towns and villages in this region since that time: Thadin, Sesspra, Artennin, Bardah, Casteil, Nathcael, and now Ruvian. Where the others once stood, the buildings are now heaps of ash and the fields are burned and salted. Ruvian alone has escaped that fate—so far. I do not believe the battle for Ruvian is done.

"The reason for the Storm Lord's fury is not clear to me. I have traveled far in these three weeks, speaking to fire giants and goblins, human lords and elven queens. I have heard many tales about this Storm Lord, but none to explain why he has brought his keep out from the mountains to rain terror on these villages. Still, I have a theory. One fire giant mentioned to me that the Storm Lord has a daughter of whom he is vastly proud. Though young, she is said to be mighty with the sword and magic, qualities the Storm Lord certainly respects. I also heard tell of a band of adventurers in this region boasting that they killed a powerful female cloud giant just over a month ago. If my suspicions are correct, the Storm Lord's fury springs from the death of his daughter."

Secretly make Sense Motive checks for the characters, opposed by Elina's +21 Bluff score. If a character beats her Bluff result, the character can tell that Elina is uncomfortable while talking about the Storm Lord's daughter. The reason she is uncomfortable, of course, is that she didn't "hear tell of a band of adventurers" who killed the giant; she was part of the band and participated in the killing. A successful Sense Motive check doesn't reveal that she is lying or what the truth is, but magic might.

If the characters ask other NPCs about Elina, they hear nothing but good things. She is a bard of considerable renown in the Yeomanry—a high-level character (though far short of the player characters) who has not grown too proud to socialize with the common folk. She is known to move through all levels of society, visiting with nobles and farmers alike, and to have contacts among all the races of the region. Her claim to have visited "human lords and elven queens," not to mention fire giants, is most likely true, in the estimation of most villagers. She also has a knack for knowing the right story for any audience and any occasion, and her repertoire ranges from ancient histories to contemporary folk tales. If there is anything negative to be said about Elina, it would be that her tales sometimes seem too far-fetched to be believed. Even so, her vast knowledge makes even the wildest fantasy credible.

Elina urges the characters to take the battle to the Storm Lord's keep as soon as possible, fearing that another attack cannot be long in coming. She knows and explains, if the characters haven't figured it out yet, that the Storm Lord lives on top of the thunderhead that still hovers over Ruvian. She knows ancient stories that speak of the Storm Lord's keep in vague terms: the Great Gate, the Lightning Stair, the Lower Keep, the Rumble of Thunder, Stair's End, Starswatch—names with no details attached. (If the party includes a bard, allow that character a bardic knowledge check [DC 30] to supply these names, rather than Elina offering them.)

INFORMATION GATHERING

Mundane methods of learning more about the Storm Lord are unlikely to prove useful: Elina knows more

about him than any other human anywhere nearby, with the possible exception of some sage sequestered away in a library somewhere. Gather Information checks reveal nothing about the giant, and even bardic knowledge can reveal no more than Elina has already told. There is no time to use *legend lore* (see below), and *vision* with the Storm Lord as its subject only vaguely supplements the information Elina reveals: "The Storm Lord's quest is life from death, to find his daughter's halted breath." A *commune* or similar spell can reveal that the Storm Lord's daughter's soul is imprisoned, and even that the gem holding the soul is in Ruvian, in Elina's possession.

The existence of the chichimec is a secret known only to the Storm Lord and Phaulkon, so even *commune* and similar spells cannot reveal that information.

On a more tactical level, *scrying* and similar spells cannot locate the Storm Lord, since his residence is laced with magical *inscriptions of vacancy* (similar to the effects of the *false vision* spell, but the inscriptions automatically create the illusion of an empty room). In addition, the Storm Lord casts *detect scrying* every morning, so he always knows when the characters attempt to *scry* on him.

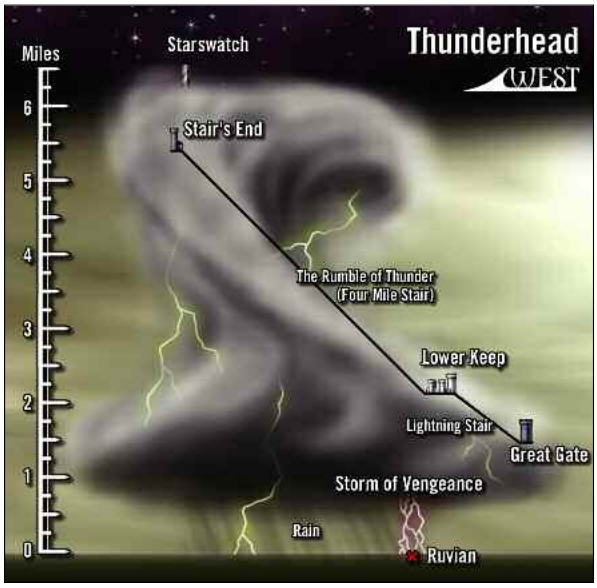
TIME IS SHORT

The characters do not have time to waste in Ruvian. The Storm Lord has his own agenda to advance, and does not simply sit in his keep waiting for the characters to come to him.

Three hours after the first assault, the Storm Lord casts *scrying* to try and determine the PCs' current location. If the spell works, he sends another three wings of white roc riders out from the keep directly to the characters' location, with orders to kill or capture the them. In addition, if they are out in the rain for any reason, he targets them with the *call lightning* function of the crown of the Storm Lord. A single bolt of lightning deals 10d10 points of damage (Reflex save DC 16 for half) to anything within 10 feet of the target point. He repeats this tactic every 10 minutes, as long as the characters remain viable targets.

If the *scrying* spell does not work, he sends the riders out to find and kill or capture the characters. In this case, the riders circle the thunderhead first, attacking the characters there if they are already making their way toward the keep, then fly over the town until they have an idea of where the characters might be or the characters attack them.

Exactly 24 hours after the first assault, the Storm Lord activates the *storm of vengeance* function of the cloud again. Refer to "The Breaking Storm" on page 72 for the specific effects. He does this every 24 hours.



THE STORM LORD'S KEEP

The Storm Lord's keep is located on a magical thundercloud six miles in diameter and six miles high. As shown on the map of the thunderhead, the keep actually consists of four separate complexes, ranging from the single tower of Starswatch to the several attached buildings of the Lower Keep. Each area has its own map, while the overall view of the thunderhead map shows their relation to each other.

THUNDERHEAD FEATURES

The cloud itself is a magical artifact, created by the deity Phaulkon to serve as a prison for the chichimec. The weather produced by the cloud cannot be *controlled* or *dispelled*. The body of the cloud is like an enormous *solid fog* effect, obscuring the vision and slowing the movement of any creature that tries to move through it. (Incorporeal creatures, such as the thunder worms that live inside the cloud, move freely but still cannot see clearly through the cloud.) In addition, random pockets within the cloud are actually acidic, harming creatures within them like an *acid fog* spell (dealing 2d6 points of acid damage each round a creature remains in the pocket). These pockets range in diameter from 20 feet to a quarter mile.

In addition, the inside of the thunderhead is hardly a static environment—it is a raging storm, after all. The same severe winds that prevail in the storm below the cloud fill the cloud as well, although they do not disperse the *solid fog*. Similar to the pockets of *acid fog* in the cloud, random areas of the cloud's interior are treated as perpetual *ice storm* effects. Each round the characters remain inside such an area, they take 3d6 points of impact damage and 2d6 points of cold damage. These areas have the same size range as the *acid fog* pockets.

Cold: The higher up on the thunderhead a character travels, the colder the air becomes, dropping about 3° F for every 1,000 feet climbed. By the time characters reach the Great Gate, the temperature is already below 40° F. However, epic-level characters can easily make the Fortitude saves required to avoid subdual damage, which is practically inconsequential to them anyway. However, even epic-level characters are hindered by frostbite (fatigue) if they fail even one saving throw. About four miles above the ground, the temperature has plummeted to 0° F, but again the saving throws and the consequences of failure are mostly trivial to epic-level characters. (See "Cold Dangers" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the specific rules.) Starswatch, perched on the top of the thunderhead about six and a half miles above the ground boasts a temperature of –40° F. At this point, characters without magical cold protection automatically suffer 1d6 points of subdual damage each minute, and are fatigued as soon as they take any subdual damage from the cold.

Altitude: As with cold, the dangers of low oxygen at the cloud's high altitudes are slight to characters of epic level. The thunderhead rises well above 20,000 feet (characters climbing the Rumble of Thunder cross the 20,000-foot mark about halfway), at which point characters are at risk for altitude sickness.

A more serious threat related to altitude is that of falling from a height potentially as great as six and a half miles. The slowing properties of *solid fog* mean that distance fallen through the cloud does not count

THUNDER WORM

Colossal Magical Beast (Incorporeal)
Hit Dice: 48d10+432 (696 hp)
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
Speed: Fly 60 ft.
AC: 36 (–8 size, +5 Dex, +16 deflection, +13 insight)
Attacks: Incorporeal touch +40 melee touch
Damage: Incorporeal touch 4d6 electricity plus 4d6 sonic
Face/Reach: 40 ft. by 40 ft. (coiled)/20 ft.
Special Attacks: Thunderclap, engulf
Special Qualities: Electricity and sonic immunity, defensive shock, incorporeal, blindsight, SR 30
Saves: Fort +35, Ref +26, Will +22
Abilities: Str —, Dex 21, Con 28, Int 14, Wis 19, Cha 42
Skills: Hide +11+5dex, Intuit Direction +11+4wis, Listen +11+4wis+2alrt, Spot +11+4wis+2alrt
Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack

Climate/Terrain: Temperate land
Organization: Solitary or pod (2–4)
Challenge Rating: 21
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 49–144 HD (Colossal)

Thunder worms are sometimes called "living storms," for they float about in clouds, their bodies coursing with electrical and sonic energy.

Some sages and adventurers compare thunder worms to purple worms, but the similarity ends in the wormlike shape shared by both monsters. Thunder worms are incorporeal, with cloudlike bodies that resist material attacks. They appear like long clouds of mist, ranging from wispy white to threatening black in color, as well as through many shades of gray. Lightning-like discharges dance constantly through their forms, and they make a soft rumbling sound when agitated.

Thunder worms do not speak, but they understand Common, Auran, and Giant.

Combat

Thunder worms tend to initiate combat with their thunderclap attacks, then close on their foes to touch and engulf them.

Thunderclap (Ex): A thunder worm can produce a thunderous boom as a standard action. Creatures within 30 feet of the worm must make a successful Reflex save (DC 43) or take 24d8 points of sonic damage. After producing a thunderclap, a thunder worm must wait 1d4 rounds before doing it again.

Engulf (Ex): As an incorporeal creature, a thunder worm can position itself so that it occupies the same spaces as its enemies—a fate potentially far worse than being swallowed by a purple worm. This attack affects as many creatures as will fit within the cloud worm's facing (a 40-foot cube). Target creatures must make a successful Reflex save (DC 43) or take electricity and sonic damage as if hit by the cloud worm's incorporeal touch attack. Affected creatures take damage each round they remain within the cloud worm's body, with no further opportunities for saving throws. Creatures that make a successful saving throw must continue to save each round they remain within the worm's body, taking damage if they fail (and thereafter receiving no additional saving throws until they move out of its body).

Defensive Shock (Ex): An opponent that uses a metal melee weapon or a natural weapon to deal damage to a thunder worm must make a Reflex save (DC 34) or take 2d6 points of electricity damage from the creature's body.

Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks ignore armor. Always moves silently.

Blindsight (Ex): Thunder worms can sense the exact location of any creature within 90 feet.

toward falling damage suffered upon landing, but the bottom of the cloud is still half a mile from the ground. Creatures falling from that height take the maximum of 20d6 points of damage.

An important question when characters fall such tremendous distances is their rate of descent, since a falling character (particularly one falling through the *solid fog* of the cloud) could have several rounds in which to save herself. Unhindered, a character accelerates to maximum speed (about 130 miles per hour) in the first round, falling about 670 feet in that round. In each successive round, the character falls about 1,150 feet at a constant speed. Thus, a character falling 6 1/2 miles (34,320 feet) would fall for just over 30 rounds, hitting the ground in the 31st round. Falling just 1/2 mile (from the bottom of the cloud) still takes 3 rounds.

Solid fog cuts the speed of a falling character to one-tenth normal, just like it reduces the speed of a character moving normally. Thus, a character falling through solid fog travels at a rate of 13 miles per hour, or 115 feet per round. A character who fell from the top of the thunderhead through the whole cloud (6 miles, or 31,680 feet) would fall for 275 rounds (nearly half an hour) before emerging at the bottom and plummeting the remaining half-mile at full speed (670 feet the first round, 1,150 feet each successive round).

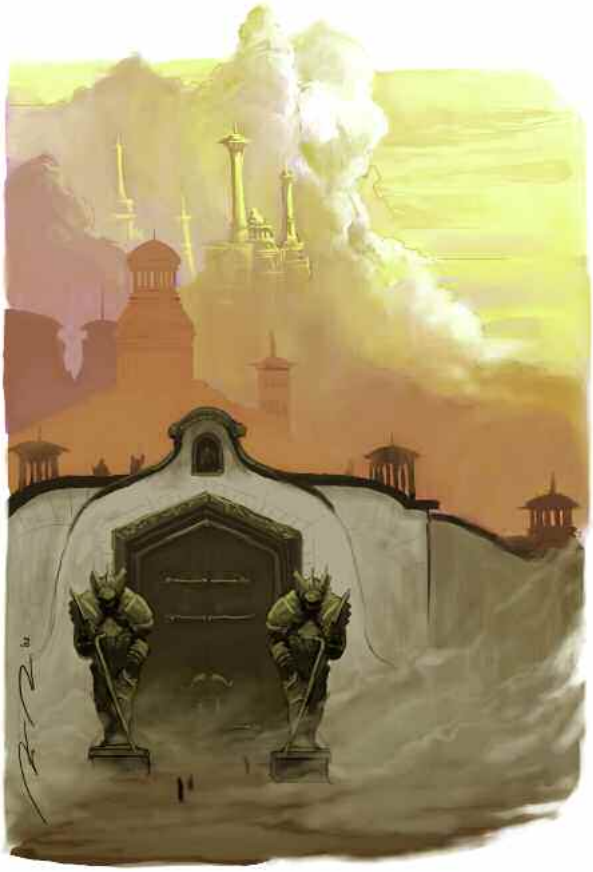
Encounters: Though it hardly seems like a hospitable environment, the Storm Lord's thundercloud has its own native inhabitants: incorporeal monsters called thunder worms (see sidebar). These enormous creatures seem to be living storms, with lightning and thunder coursing through their immaterial bodies. They float rapidly through the cloud, unhindered by the movement-slowing properties of the solid fog, traveling in pods of 2–4 creatures.

Every minute the PCs remain inside the cloud, roll 1d10 and consult the "Cloud Encounters" table.

Distance: Since characters are likely to spend most of this adventure flying under the influence of spells or other effects with limited duration, it is important to keep track of the passage of time, particularly when characters travel long distances—such as the length or height of the thunderhead. The cloud is six miles in diameter, which would take even characters flying at a speed of 90 feet 18 minutes to cover—and many characters are likely to be flying (wearing medium or heavy armor with the *fly* spell) no faster than 60 feet, taking 27 minutes. Flying up is slower, while flying down is faster. The "Travel Times" table summarizes travel times based on base speed and whether the travel is up, down, or basically horizontal. Times are listed in minutes.

CLOUD ENCOUNTERS

Roll	Result
1	Characters wander into a pocket of *acid fog*
2	Characters encounter an *ice storm*
3	1d3+1 thunder worms attack
4–10	No encounter



KEEP FEATURES

The buildings of the Storm Lord's Keep are built on platforms made of force (like a *wall of force* spell) floating atop the cloud's surface by means of the artifact-level magic of the cloud. No mortal magic (except an epic spell built on the Dispel seed) can dispel or suppress this magic. A successful epic dispel suppresses the magic of one force platform for 1d4 rounds. During this time, the affected platform falls 115 feet per round through the *solid fog* of the cloud, and stops falling several hundred feet lower when its magic returns. It is thus theoretically possible, through repeated applications of such a spell, to send a portion of the keep plummeting to the ground—but after the first short fall, every resident of the targeted portion of the keep is sure to mobilize to stop the characters from accomplishing this task.

The buildings are made for cloud giants, which means primarily they are built on a massive scale: Every room in the keep is about four times larger than

TRAVEL TIMES

	Speed 90 feet			Speed 60 feet		
Distance	Horizontal	Up	Down	Horizontal	Up	Down
1/4 mile	0:45	1:30	0:22	1:07	2:15	0:33
1/2 mile	1:30	3:00	0:45	2:15	4:30	1:07
1 mile	3:00	6:00	1:30	4:30	9:00	2:15
2 miles	6:00	12:00	3:00	9:00	18:00	4:30
3 miles	9:00	18:00	4:00	13:30	27:00	6:45
4 miles	12:00	24:00	6:00	18:00	36:00	9:00

it would be in a human keep. In addition, the keep is elaborate on a (literally) epic scale, making extensive use of fantastic materials and magical fortifications. Cost was not an issue when Phaulkon constructed the stronghold to serve as his offpsring's prison. Unless noted otherwise, the following features are in place throughout the different areas of the keep.

Walls: The walls of the keep, inside and out, are made from blocks of white marble fitted almost seamlessly together. They are thicker than the walls in a human-built castle would be. Iron bars inside the walls reinforce their strength, and magical treatments make them almost impenetrable. The white marble gleams like silver in the sunlight.

Magically Treated, Reinforced Masonry Walls: 2 feet thick; hardness 16; hp 720; AC 5; break DC 75; Climb DC 25.

Doors: Most doors throughout the keep are made of mithral—light and very strong. Perhaps fortunately for the characters, most doors are neither locked nor stuck, as the keep is in excellent repair.

Mithral Doors: 8 inches thick; hardness 15; hp 240; AC 5; break DC 60.

Ceilings: Ceilings within the buildings of the keep are typically 25 feet high, allowing cloud giants reasonable head room. Some rooms have higher ceilings, as noted in the individual room descriptions.

GREAT GATE (AREA G)

Though it is built as if it were a key defensive position, the Great Gate is really ornamental, since opponents can easily bypass it to reach the Lower Keep or other portions of the Storm Lord's domain. On the rare occasions that the Storm Lord receives diplomatic visitors, however, they are always escorted to the Great Gate first, then led up the Lightning Stair to the Lower Keep.

Recognizing its purely ornamental function, the Storm Lord does not post many guards at the Great Gate. Two magical guardians have stood outside the entrance since the gate was erected, and two white roc riders are positioned at the tops of the gate towers to intercept intruders. Two off-duty white roc riders are usually in the gate area at any given time, but otherwise, the gate is empty.

If the riders on the tower roofs see characters approaching or fighting the mithral golems at area **G1**, they blow an alarm on a *horn of sounding* and fly to intercept them (or join a combat in progress in front of the gate). When an alarm sounds, the white roc riders in the areas marked **G8** hurry to the balconies (**G7**), hoping to intercept characters entering the gate from a higher position.

G1. THE OUTER DOORS (EL 23)

Two enormous mithral doors—each 20 feet wide and 60 feet tall—stand proudly in the middle of this structure, flanked by two huge figures covered from head to toe in armor apparently made of the same substance.

The doors, simply because of their size, require a Strength check (DC 22) to pull open or push closed. A Medium-size or smaller creature must use a full-round action to open or close a door, while a Large or larger creature (provided it can make the Strength check) can open or close it as a move-equivalent action, as normal.

Creatures: The figures flanking the doors are crafted to look much like armored cloud giants, but they are actually mithral golems. Their orders are to attack any creature that tries to open the doors without a giant present.

Mithral Golems (2): hp 191, 211; see *Epic Level Handbook*.

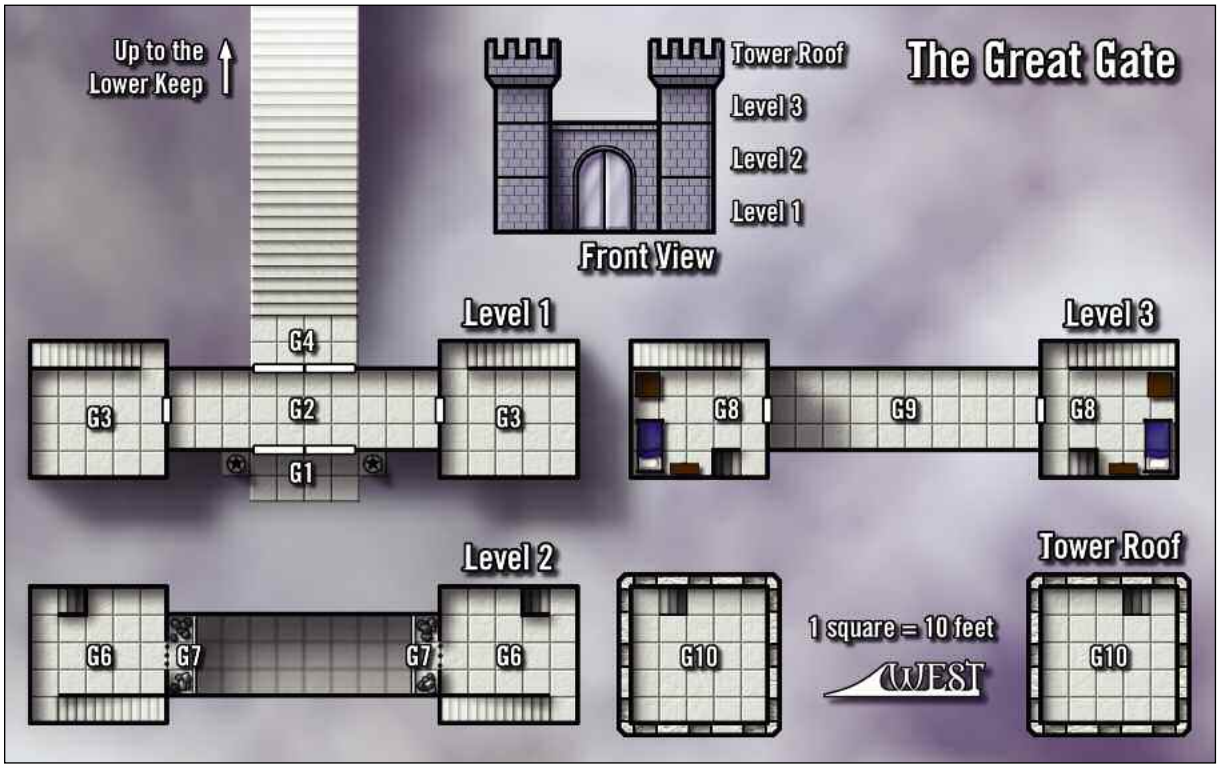
G2. THE INNER GATE (EL VARIABLE)

This room is wide but shallow—just 30 feet from the doors leading in. Another pair of enormous mithral doors leads right back out. At either end of the room, smaller doors lead into the towers that flank the gate. The ceiling towers up 100 feet, with a pair of balconies about 50 feet up overlooking this space.

Like the outer doors, the second pair are large and heavy. They require a Strength check (DC 22) to pull open or push closed. A Medium-size or smaller creature must use a full-round action to open or close a door, while a Large or larger creature (provided it can make the Strength check) can open or close it as a move-equivalent action, as normal.

The mithral doors at the ends of the room (leading into the two rooms marked **G3**) are locked from the tower side (Open Lock DC 35, Break DC 60).

A giant fighting from one of the balconies (area **G7**) has three-quarters cover to a character on the ground, or one-quarter cover to a flying character at least 50 feet off the ground (or a character on the opposite bal-



cony). A Medium-size creature standing on a balcony can't effectively fight over the top; a flying character can choose any degree of cover by fighting from behind the balcony wall.

Creatures: If one of the giants on the roof blew the *horn of sounding*, there is one off-duty white roc rider on each balcony (**G7**), a rock in hand ready to heave at characters that enter this area. See area **G7** for more information.

G3. TOWER GROUND FLOOR

A staircase leads along one wall of this square room. Otherwise, the room is bare of decorations or furnishings.

These rooms are unremarkable.

G4. THE LIGHTNING STAIR

A wide, steep stairway leads up from the gatehouse building to disappear into the cloud above. The steps are clearly sized for giants.

See "The Lightning Stair" on page 82 for more information about the stairway.

G6. TOWER MIDDLE FLOOR

Across from the stairs leading down, another flight of stairs ascends to the next floor of the tower. A shining mithral portcullis leads out to one of the balconies overlooking the gate house area.

The mithral portcullis is harder and stronger than an iron one.

Mithral Portcullis: 2 inches thick, hardness 15; hp 60; AC 5; break DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

G7. TOWER BALCONY (EL VARIABLE)

Two piles of boulders—each rock about 4 to 5 feet in diameter—are stacked at either end of the balcony, presumably in easy reach for a giant standing on it. The wall at the edge of the balcony is 9 feet tall.

See the text for area **G2** for rules on cover for creatures and characters fighting from the balcony.

Creatures (EL17 or 19): If one of the giants on the roof blew the *horn of sounding*, there is one off-duty white roc rider on each balcony, a rock in hand ready to heave at characters that enter area **G2**. They are fully armed but unarmored, since their full plate armor takes too long to put on. One giant is an EL 17 encounter; two are an EL 19 encounter.

White Roc Rider (1–2): hp 308, 331; see statistics in the appendix on page 100. These riders did not have time to put on their armor (although they have their shields and the rest of their gear), so they have the following modified statistics: Spd 50 ft.; AC 28 (touch 10, flat-footed 26); Climb +17, Hide –7, Jump +17. The giants have 40 throwing rocks near at hand; a move-equivalent action is required to pick up a rock for throwing.

G8. TOWER TOP FLOOR (EL VARIABLE)

The doors into these rooms from the gate roof are locked and barred at all times (Open Lock DC 40, break DC 60).

Impeccably neat and completely lacking in any decoration, this room appears to be a minimal barracks: A single giant-sized bunk stands in one corner, with a large dresser beside it. Another staircase leads still farther up, while a door leads out toward the gatehouse area, barred on this side with a thick bolt of mithral. A square marble-topped table with two chairs fills another corner. The various pieces of a suit of giant-sized full plate armor are neatly stacked near the top of the stairs going down.

These two rooms are the homes of the four giants who guard the Great Gate. Most of the time, one giant is in each of these rooms while the other two giants are stationed on the tower roofs. The dresser has two drawers and holds miscellaneous personal belongings—clothes, coins (1d6 x 100 gp total), combs and brushes, a set of large dice, and so on. The tables are small two-person *tables of feasting* (the full-sized version seats twelve and is described in the *Stronghold Builder's Guide*). See the "New Magic Items" sidebar for details.

Creatures (EL 17 or 19): If no alarm has yet been sounded, there is one off-duty white roc rider in each tower's top floor. They are fully armed but unarmored, since their full plate armor takes too long to put on.

White Roc Rider (1–2): hp 308 (left tower), 331 (right tower); see statistics in the appendix on page 100. These riders did not have time to put on their armor (although they have their shields and the rest of their gear), so they have the following modified statistics: Spd 50 ft.; AC 28 (touch 10, flat-footed 26); Climb +17, Hide –7, Jump +17. The giants have 40 throwing rocks near at hand; a move-equivalent action is required to pick up a rock for throwing.

G9. GATE ROOF (EL VARIABLE)

This rooftop offers a commanding view, in one direction, of the countryside around Ruvian—the carefully-tended fields that, from this distance, show no sign of the terror they've recently endured—and in the other direction, of the towering top of the thunderhead, a wide staircase leading up into the mist. The two towers that flank the gate rise some 50 feet up from this rooftop.

The roof of the gate house is not intended as a defensive position. No walls protect characters standing on the ceiling from any attacks.

Creatures (EL 19): If the characters happen to wander out onto the roof without yet having raised an alarm, the white roc riders on the tower roofs are unlikely to notice them (–5 to their Spot checks) because they focus their attention outward rather than down onto the roof between them. They still hear any loud noise (such as attempts to break open a door to get off the roof) and respond by swooping down on their white rocs to attack. See area **G10** for the statistics of the white roc riders.

G10. TOWER ROOF (EL 17–19)

A high, crenelated wall surrounds this tower roof. An ogre could barely see over the wall at its low points, and a giant would have total cover behind one of the high points.

A giant fighting from the rooftop can use the battlements for anything from one-quarter to total cover. A Medium-size creature behind the wall has total cover regardless of how it is positioned with relation to the battlements. Of course, characters on the same side of the wall gain no cover relative to each other.

Creatures: One white roc rider is stationed as a guard on each rooftop, his mount beside him. At any sign of trouble or attack, one rider blows a *horn of sounding* and both mount their steeds (attempting to do so as a free action) and fly into battle. These riders and their mounts look just the same as the ones that flew into Ruvian at the beginning of the adventure.

White Roc Riders: hp 305 (left tower), 324 (right tower); see statistics in the appendix on page 100. Both riders also have *horns of sounding* (see the sidebar on page 88).

White Roc (2): hp 278 (left tower), 272 (right tower); see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

LIGHTNING STAIR

The Lightning Stair is 7/8 of a mile long and rises 1/2 mile to the Lower Keep. The marble steps are sized for 18-foot tall giants: each step is 18 inches high and 31 inches wide, making them difficult for humans to walk up and nearly impossible for dwarves and Small characters. Medium-size characters (except dwarves) can ascend the steps at half their normal speed; Small characters must use a move-equivalent action to climb each step. Flying, obviously, is a much more efficient way to reach the top of the stairs.

The clear advantage to using the Lightning Stair to reach the Lower Keep is that thunder worms avoid the stair. The disadvantage is that giants use it: Every ten minutes (or portion thereof) the characters spend on or near the Lightning Stair, there is a 10% chance they encounter either a wing of four white roc riders flying overhead on their mounts (65%) or a pair of sentries

walking the opposite direction on the stair (35%).

White Roc Riders (EL 21): Unless the characters are well-hidden, the giants or certainly their mounts spot the characters on the stair, circle for a moment, then swoop down to attack.

White Roc Riders (4): hp 333, 305, 331, 337; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

White Roc (4): hp 271, 249, 245, 239; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

Sentries (EL 21): The sentries almost certainly spot the characters on the stair and hurry to attack.

Sentries (2): hp 363, 368; see statistics in he appendix on page 100.

LOWER KEEP (AREA L)

The Lower Keep is the largest structure in the Storm Lord's keep, and consists of three major buildings: The Great Tower, the Temple of the Storm, and the Tower of Thunder. The two towers are both situated along a wall that surrounds an inner courtyard. Five smaller towers are also spaced along the outer wall, serving as watchposts and residences for the bulk of the keep's population (including noncombatants). The inner courtyard contains gardens of gigantic fruit trees, a circle of standing stones called the Ring of Lightning, and the Temple of the Storm.

L1. THE LIGHTNING STAIR

After nearly a mile, the long staircase ends before a tower that reaches 100 feet above the transparent platform it is built upon. On either side of the tower, walls stretch away to join with other, smaller towers, rising in altitude as they head off in the distance. In the distance, the top of another tower—the largest one in sight—is barely visible over the walls.

See "The Great Tower" (page 86) for details on the entrance to the keep and its defenses.

L2. SMALLER TOWERS (EL VARIABLE)

Five relatively small towers are spaced along the keep's outer wall. Each tower is 60 feet in diameter and 150 feet high, consisting of six stories with 24-foot ceilings. All in all, the towers are home to sixty cloud giant families, including the well-trained sentries and white roc riders as well as ordinary (no class levels) cloud giants, a few low-level sorcerers and fighters, and noncombatant children.

The inset on the map of the Lower Keep shows a typical level in one of the smaller towers. The overview map shows the doors that lead into each tower on the ground level; these doors open into the bottom of a staircase, facing the door to the tower interior. Each level of the towers is divided into two small apartments, each containing a large family bed, a tall dresser, and a table with chairs. A typical apartment is home to two adult cloud giants and one child (see the *Monster Manual*, page 100, for details about giant children), all of which are too weak to challenge to 21st-level PCs. For this reason above all, detailing the statistics of all these giants and the minutiae of their homes is beyond the scope of this adventure. If the characters decide to go on a giant-killing spree, remind them that it earns them no XP and do not reward them with any significant treasure. Organized resistance meets them quickly in the form of sentry teams seeking to prevent widespread carnage—these groups are the giant equivalent of the role the characters played in the defense of Ruvian. Pairs of two sentries (EL 21) meet the characters at first, escalating to groups of three (EL 22), four (EL 23), or five (EL 24).

Sentries (2–5): hp 364 average; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

L3. COURTYARD

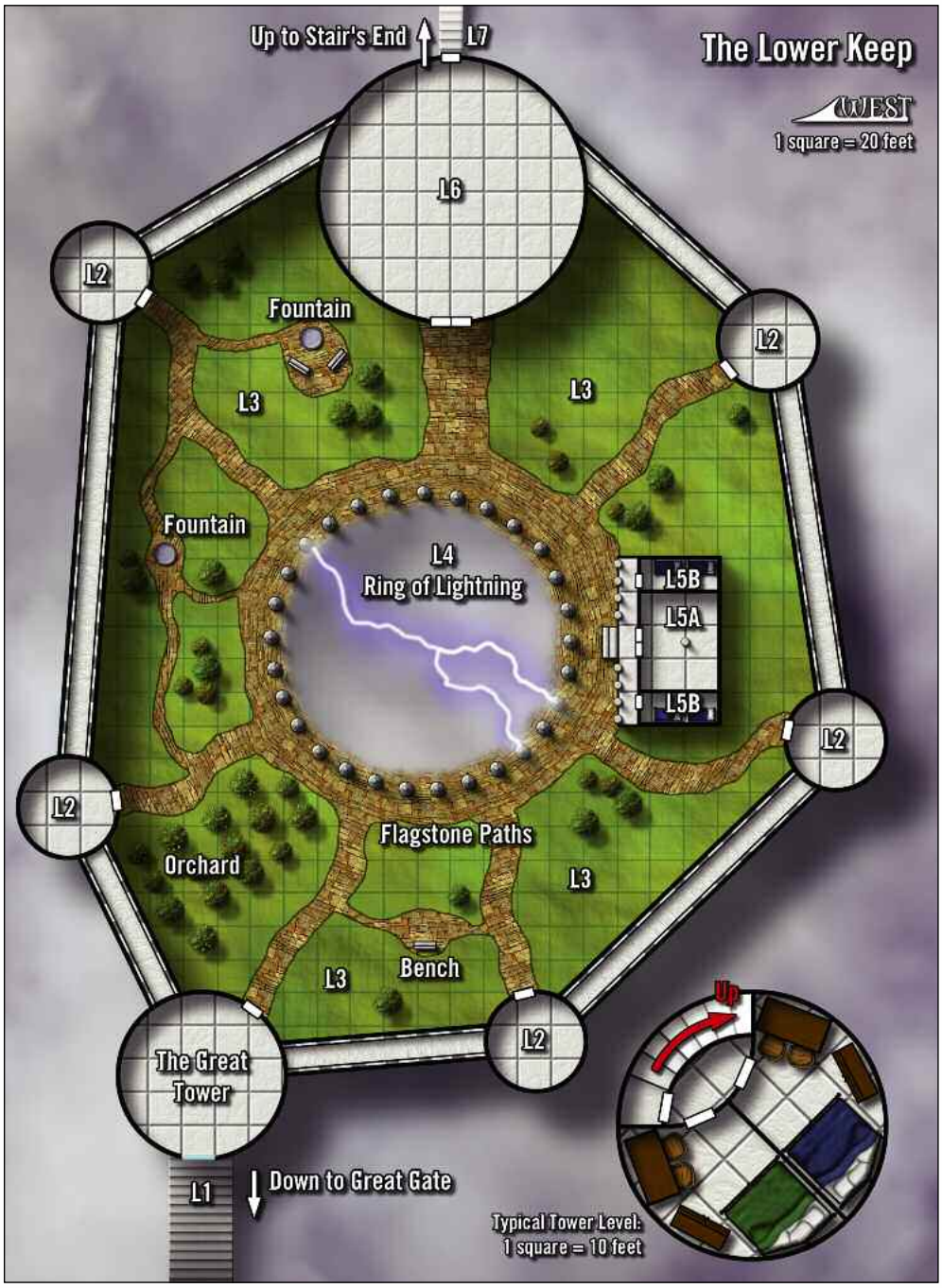
Inside the castle courtyard, it is suddenly easy to forget that you are on top of a cloud and over two miles up in the air. Lush fruit trees grow in orderly rows, sinking their roots into what certainly looks like real soil. Flowers are sprinkled among the foliage, complementing the buds starting to swell on the trees. A tidy path winds gently between the rows of trees and flowers, formed of smooth white flagstones rather than transparent force. The occasional flash of lightning in the distance or rumble of thunder gently rocking the ground serve as the only reminders of this castle's unique location.

Any time the characters spend in the courtyard, the Storm Lord quite intentionally grants to them as a literal calm before the storm. For as long as they meander the pleasant paths of the garden, enjoy the gushing fountains, or even sit on a bench to relax, no resident of the keep disturbs them or even comes into view.

L4. RING OF LIGHTNING (EL 23)

At the center of the garden, the trees and flowers give way to an expansive clearing with several other paths leading away from it. Large columns that look like unhewn stone formations are arranged in a circle, forming a giant ring easily almost 200 feet across. Inside the ring, the marble flagstones of the garden paths come to an end, revealing the dark tumult of the thundercloud. Frequent flashes of lightning are visible in the cloud below the ring.

A large rectangular building crouches to one side of the standing stones, a short, wide stairway leading up to its columned porch. Lightning motifs



clearly dominate its décor, appearing in the hands of the figure depicted on the columns, in the frieze atop the columns, and on the steps.

This site is sacred to the clerics of the Storm Lord's keep, who worship the force of the storm as a vague and abstract memory of the deity who created the keep itself. The clerics have no idea of the purpose of the keep or the Storm Lord's secret, and they do not revere Phaulkon. Their divine magic comes from their devotion to the storm, not from any deity.

A character passing through the standing stones and into the Ring of Lightning is in danger. Not only is the storm cloud visible below the ground within the ring, there actually is no ground within the ring, so a character who is not flying immediately begins to sink slowly into the *solid fog* of the cloud. Second, the clerics in the Temple of the Storm (area **L5**) can see everything inside the ring from within their sanctuary (**L5-A**), and with their magic model of the ring they can cause lightning to arc in a 10-foot-wide bolt between any two stones on the perimeter of the ring. Each bolt deals 10d6 points of electricity damage and 10d6 points of sonic damage to every character in its path

(Reflex save DC 26 for half), and the clerics can create one bolt per round as long as at least two of them remain alive.

The Encounter Level for the Ring of Lightning is the EL of the clerics inside the temple (**L5-A**). Characters receive no XP for "encountering" the Ring of Lightning.

L5. TEMPLE OF THE STORM

The stairs of the rectangular building lead up to a long, narrow porch. Four columns stand on either side of the stairs, carved to resemble giants in various poses, but all holding bolts of lightning. Directly opposite the stairs, a pair of large mithral doors presumably leads into the building interior. At the far ends of the porch, two smaller doors also lead into the building.

This long porch is the front area of the Temple of the Storm, the center of the keep's religious life. The double doors lead into area **A** (the main temple area), while the smaller doors lead into the clerics' chambers (area **B**).

A. TEMPLE SANCTUARY (EL 23)

The double doors open into a spacious room with a high, peaked ceiling. A row of windows opposite the door lets light stream in from outside, focusing on a tall pedestal in the center of the room.

The ceiling in here is 20 feet high at the far edges of the room (to the left and right of the doors), peaking at 35 feet in the center. The pedestal at the center of the room is 10 feet high, making it impossible for most characters whose feet are on the ground to see what's at the top. In fact, the pedestal is the key to controlling the Ring of Lightning outside the temple.

At the top of the pedestal is an exact replica of the Ring of Lightning, but only 5 feet across, carved from white jade. A glass rod, 7 feet long, is the key to controlling the *lightning bolts:* When two clerics with access to the Storm domain hold opposite ends of the rod and touch it to two of the stones in the model of the ring, a bolt of lightning arcs between those two stones in the actual ring. Furthermore, any living creatures within the ring appear as small figments in the model, allowing the clerics to target their enemies accurately.

The glass rod can also release a *lightning bolt* when it is pointed at a target, as if it were a *wand of lightning bolt*. It functions this way, too, only for clerics with access to the Storm domain. The rod's *lightning bolt* deals 10d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex save, DC 18). When first removed, it has 50 charges, and if placed back in the replica, it recharges at a rate of 1 charge per hour.

Creatures: Four clerics of the storm are in this temple area most of the time, worshiping the storm at their pedestal. If the characters just left the Ring of Lightning, the clerics are completely ready for the PCs' arrival, which includes casting as many defensive spells as they had time to cast after the characters' arrival inside the ring.

The clerics are clad in full plate armor, but wear full-length, midnight-blue robes over their armor, representing the color of a thundercloud. They wield Gargantuan thundering morningstars like greatclubs and shout loudly while attacking.

Clerics, Male and Female Cloud Giant Clr8 (4): CR 19; Huge giant (Air); HD 17d8+119 (giant) plus 8d8+56 (Clr); hp 302, 292, 280, 303; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 34 (touch 10, flat-footed 34); Atk +33/+28/+23/+18 melee (4d6+23, *Gargantuan +4 thundering morningstar*); or +15/+10/+5/+0 ranged (2d8+13, rock); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.; SA rebuke undead 6/day, rock throwing spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., electricity resistance 5, rock catching, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +21, Ref +9, Will +18; Str 36, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 12, Wis 25, Cha 16.

Skills: Climb +12, Concentration +15, Hide –13, Jump +12, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +16, Spellcraft +9, Spot +16. *Feats:* Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/7/6/6/4; base DC = 17 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, light, purify food and drink, read magic, resistance, virtue;* 1st—*bless, cure light wounds* ×2, *divine favor, endure elements, entropic shield*, shield of faith;* 2nd—*aid, bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, endurance, gust of wind*, resist elements;* 3rd—*dispel magic, gaseous form*, invisibility purge, prayer, protection from elements, wind wall;* 4th—*cure critical wounds, death ward, divine power, sleet storm**.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Air (turn earth/rebuke air 6/day), Storm (gain electricity resistance 5).

Possessions: +4 moderate fortification full plate, Gargantuan +4 thundering morningstar, periapt of Wisdom +6, ring of protection +2, necklace of prayer beads (karma).

B. CLERICS' QUARTERS

Two beds with thin mattresses line the outside wall of this long, narrow room. It is otherwise completely devoid of furnishings, personal effects, or decoration.

The clerics lead an ascetic life, subsisting on the bland fare produced by *create food* and *create water* spells. They carry all their personal possessions on them at all times.

L6. HALL OF THUNDER

An enormous set of double doors leads into a gigantic domed hall. The room is over 150 feet in diameter, and the ceiling rises at least 80 feet high. The floor is white marble polished so smooth it looks like ice, and the dome is covered with intricate paintings of breathtaking beauty. Something about the construction of the dome—or perhaps it is a magical effect—amplifies sound, so even the softest whisper reverberates loudly in the chamber.

The Hall of Thunder is the Storm Lord's audience chamber, designed to impress visitors and emphasize the Storm Lord's majesty. The effect on sound is magical in nature, and can be suppressed in an *antimagic field* or by a *greater dispelling* (its caster level is 20). Its effects are twofold: Characters receive a –20 penalty to Move Silently checks made within the Hall of Thunder, and all sonic effects are treated as though they had the Empower Spell feat applied to them, without using a higher-level spell slot.

A careful examination of the floor (Search DC 30) reveals the faintest etching of a circle, 10 feet in diameter, in the exact center of the hall. A character standing in that circle can use a *shout* spell, Empowered by the room's effects, at will. The Storm Lord uses this ability to chastise visitors or underlings who anger him.

Creature: If he survived his first encounter with the characters, the Thunder Champion is here to greet them when they arrive. As the Storm Lord's seneschal, he has been charged with the responsibility to defend his lord from these adventurers, and he now fights them to the death.

Thunder Champion: hp 376; see statistics on page 75.

L7. THE RUMBLE OF THUNDER

Another stairway, this one only 20 feet wide and considerably steeper than the other, rises high up the side of the thunderhead from outside the keep's walls. Its top is shrouded in roiling vapor.

The Rumble of Thunder, also called the Four Mile Stair, is fully described on page 93.

THE GREAT TOWER (AREA T)

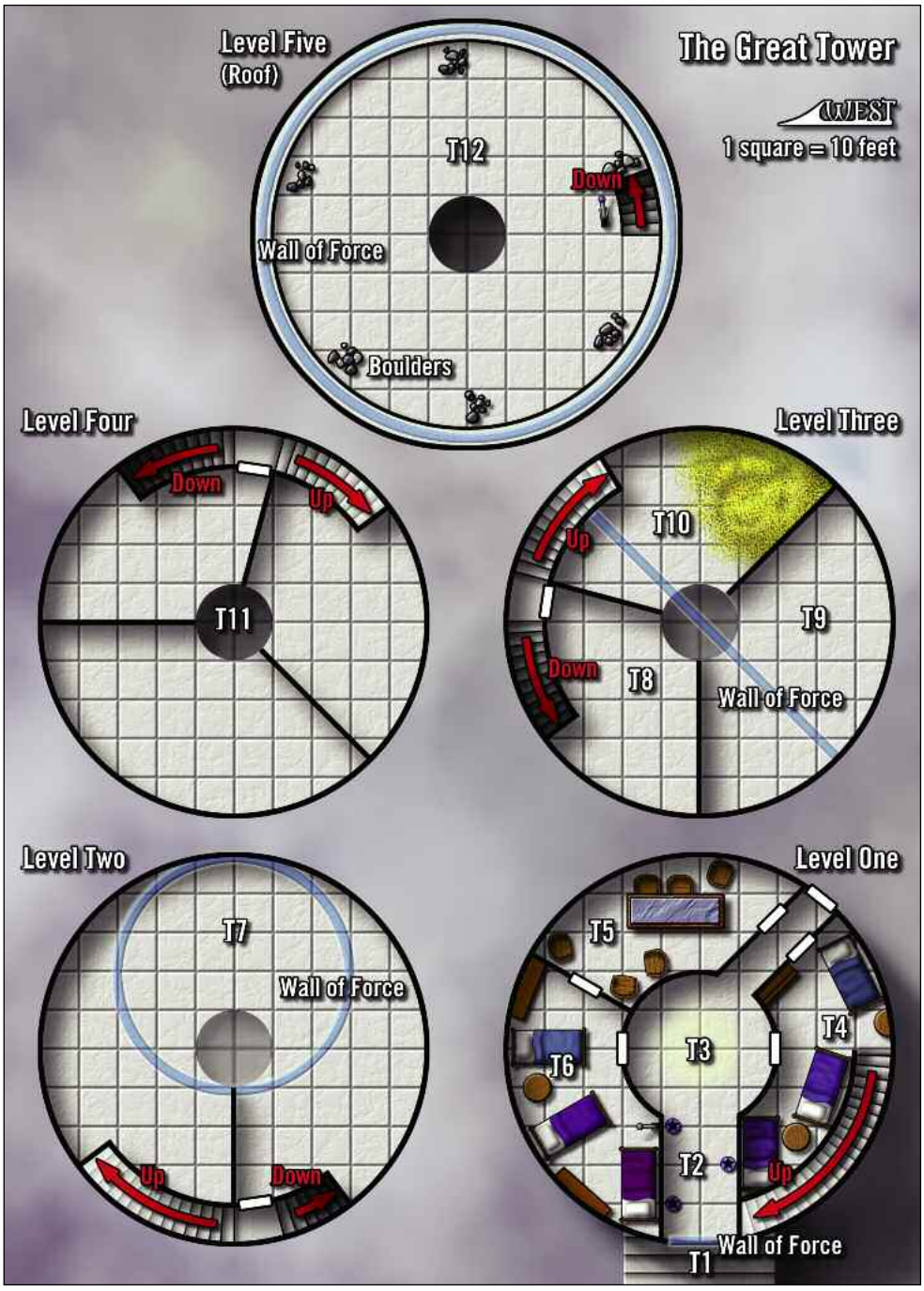
The Great Tower is the watchpost for the Lower Keep, situated at the top of the Lightning Stair and guarding the entrance to the keep, both from the stair and from flying creatures. The tower is 100 feet in diameter and 200 feet high. The ceilings in the tower are 50 feet high, conveying a sense of grandeur even to giants. The top of the tower is an observation platform covered with a hemisphere of force (a large *wall of force*), and force walls and floor appear in several places within the tower. These force surfaces provide a significant defensive advantage for the tower's main resident, a young force dragon named Thunder. See the description of area **T7** for more information about her use of force walls in combat.

Force Wall: 1 inch thick, hardness n/a; hp n/a; AC 5; Break DC n/a; Climb DC 70. A *wall of force* cannot be broken through by conventional means, and it suffers no damage from physical attacks. See the spell description in the *Player's Handbook* for more information.

GREAT TOWER DEFENSES

Six cloud giant fighters are on duty on the tower roof (area **T12**) at any given time. If the characters approach the keep openly (neither invisible nor well-hidden), the giants blow an alarm signal on their *horns of sounding* to alert the rest of the keep and pelt the characters with rocks as soon as they come within 600 feet of the tower. When the characters come within 100 feet of the tower, or if the characters are using long-range spells to severely damage them from even this distance, the giants switch tactics, spreading out to meet the characters at any possible point of entry. Two giants remain on the roof (with a *horn of sounding*) while four go to area **T3**. The horn of sounding awakens the off-duty giants in areas **T4** and **T6**, and those six giants begin preparing themselves for battle as well. These giants require 5 minutes to put their armor on and otherwise get ready for combat. When they are ready, they move to the same three stations, doubling the number of giants in each location. The room descriptions for areas **T3**, **T4**, **T6**, and **T12** include this information under the heading "Alerted Creatures," indicating that the giants were aware of the characters' approach.

If the characters can approach the keep unnoticed, the six giants on duty remain on the tower roof until something happens to alert them of the characters' presence. In most cases, Thunder's bellowing provides the alarm they need to move into action. As soon as the characters enter combat with Thunder, four of the giants hustle from the roof to join in the battle, while one of the giants remaining on the roof blows a *horn of sounding* to alert the off-duty giants and the rest of the keep. Since Thunder is fond of using the central shaft of the tower to move from level to level while harrying opponents who cannot pass freely through force barriers, the giants take up posts on the stairway to slow characters who are trying to follow the dragon around the tower. One giant takes up a position at each stair landing, in areas **T4**, **T8**, **T10**, and **T13**. As before, the off-duty giants require 5 minutes to arm themselves for battle, after which time they join the battle wherever



they can find an opponent. The room descriptions for areas **T3**, **T4**, **T6**, and **T12** give the default locations for each giant under the heading "Unaware Creatures."

If the characters approach the keep unnoticed but then assault the giants on the roof, one of those giants uses the first available opportunity to blow a signal on a *horn of sounding*. This alerts the off-duty giants and Thunder that an attack is coming from above. Thunder moves immediately to area **T8** to protect her treasure hoard, while the off-duty giants don their armor and head upstairs, looking for foes on each floor before advancing upward.

LEVEL ONE

Only two levels within the tower—this bottom floor and the roof—are used by the giants who guard this tower. The rest of the Great Tower is the lair of the force dragon, Thunder.

T1. FORCE PORTCULLIS

A huge open archway—20 feet wide and twice that tall—leads into the recesses of this tower. Beyond, you can see a hallway adorned with fine paintings and sculptures.

The archway seems open, even to characters with *see invisibility* or *true seeing* active, because it is covered by a portcullis-like door made of force—perfectly transparent as well as naturally invisible. Unlike an iron portcullis, the force version is not formed of bars with space between them; it is a thin, relatively small *wall of force* whose only resemblance to an ordinary portcullis is the fact that it slides upward into the ceiling when a magical trigger is activated. (The trigger is located in room **T6**.)

Force Portcullis: 1 inch thick, hardness n/a; hp n/a; AC 5; lift DC 50.

T2. ENTRY HALL

Several fine paintings hang on the walls of this wide hallway, and three elegant abstract sculptures are set on marble pedestals near the walls. Just a short distance ahead, the hallway opens into a well-lit room.

There are eight paintings in the hallway, all skyscapes depicting sweeping expanses of clouds and striking cloud formations with light streaming in bright beams through gaps in the clouds. The three sculptures are carved from black and dark blue stone, contrasting sharply with the white marble walls and pedestals.

Treasure: Each painting is worth 4d6×100 gp to a serious art collector, since they are centuries old and quite exotic. Transporting them is a possible concern, since they are large (6 feet by 9 feet) and heavy (200 pounds each). The statues are worth only 2d6×100 gp, and are heavier (500 pounds each).

T3. ATRIUM (EL VARIABLE)

A circle of sunlight lights up the floor, pouring in through a hole in the ceiling, about 20 feet in diameter. Two huge mithral doors face each other across this atrium, while a narrower hallway extends out at a crooked angle.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Horn of Sounding: A blast on this giant-sized horn can be heard at a distance of ten miles, regardless of natural conditions in the area. Only a magical *silence* effect or (magical or natural) deafness can prevent a creature within range of the horn from hearing it when sounded.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *ventriloquism; Market Price:* 2,000 gp; *Cost to Create:* 1,000 gp + 80 XP; *Weight:* 10 lb.

Table of Feasting: This massive, marble-topped table seats some number from 2–8 and magically delivers three fantastic meals per day, each of which works as a *heroes' feast*. Each feast requires an hour to eat. Those that sit through the whole meal are cured of all diseases, are immune to poison and to magical fear and hopelessness, and are healed of 1d4+4 points of damage after drinking the draughts of nectar that come with the feast. They also gain the effects of a *bless* spell (morale bonus of +1 to attack rolls and saving throws against fear effects). All non-instantaneous effects last for 12 hours after the characters complete the meal, and are included in the sentry statistics.

Any interruption of the feast ruins the effects.

Caster Level: 2nd (2-person table), 6th (6-person table), 8th (8-person table); *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *heroes' feast; Market Price:* 7,200 gp (2-person table), 21,600 (6-person table), 28,800 gp (8-person table); *Cost to Create:* 3,600 gp + 288 XP (2-person table), 10,800 gp + 864 XP (6-person table), 14,400 gp + 1,152 XP (8-person table).

As a piece of wondrous architecture, the *table of feasting* is difficult to remove and sell. It weighs 4,000 pounds and is too wide to fit through the doors to the room without being turned on its side and carefully maneuvered out. It can be temporarily disabled like a magic trap: A successful Disable Device check (DC 31) suppresses its magic properties for 1d4 rounds, or 1d4 minutes if the check result is 41 or higher. This is unlikely to matter to the giant.

Crown of the Storm Lord: The primary function of this epic magic item is to control the Storm Lord's awe-inspiring cloud stronghold. The crown appears as a gigantic platinum circlet, sized for the head of a Huge giant—and it does not magically resize. No gems or other decoration adorn the plain silvery band. Besides controlling the cloud, the crown acts as a *ring of major elemental resistance* against electricity, negating 30 points of electricity damage per round for the wearer.

Once per day, the wearer of the crown can cause the cloud-stronghold to duplicate the effects of a *storm of vengeance* spell as cast by a 20th-level cleric (save DC 23 for appropriate effects) in a 360-foot radius circle anywhere beneath the cloud. The wearer of the crown need not concentrate to maintain the spell; the storm continues until the crown wearer directs it to stop. At will, the wearer of the crown can send a *lightning bolt* to strike a target on the ground below, dealing 10d10 points of damage (Reflex save DC 16 for half) to anything within 10 feet of the target point, as if from a *call lightning* spell cast by a 20th-level druid. As with *call lightning,* the cloud can produce no more than one bolt every 10 minutes. The wearer of the crown can also choose the form of the storms that constantly rage below the cloud, within certain limits: The cloud can produce torrential rains, a thunderstorm, or a hailstorm in warm weather, or a blizzard, snowstorm, or sleet in colder weather. The wearer of the crown cannot stop precipitation from falling beneath the cloud.

The wearer of the *crown of the Storm Lord* can control the movement of the cloud as well, to a maximum speed of 15 miles per hour.

Caster Level: 20th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Epic Wondrous Item, *resistance, control weather, call lightning, storm of vengeance; Market Price:* 450,000 gp; *Cost to Create:* 225,000 gp + 14,500 XP; *Weight:* 5 lb.

The hole in the ceiling is actually covered by a horizontal sheet of force, identical to a *wall of force*.

Unaware Creatures (EL 22): If the giants were not aware of the characters' approach, no giants are here when they arrive. However, Thunder is on constant watch while the thunderhead remains over Ruvian, her head extended through the *wall of force* from area **T7**. Her blindsight makes her aware of any corporeal creature within 90 feet (a range that extends 15 feet outside the force portcullis in area **T1**, even accounting for her height above the floor). When she sees creatures in this room, she attacks with her breath weapon (a 60-foot cone of force that deals 15d12 points of damage, Reflex save DC 32 for half), then adjusts backwards—keeping an eye on the characters but keeping herself behind the *wall of force*, waiting for them to pursue her or run away (her frightful presence activates when she breathes). She also roars to alert the giants in the tower. Thunder is CR 21, but her defensive advantage makes this an EL 22 encounter.

Thunder: hp 395; see statistics in area **T7**.

Alerted Creatures (EL 25): If the cloud giants saw the character coming, four giant fighters are in this room when the PCs arrive. They fight furiously to defend the tower, supported by Thunder's breath weapon and spellcasting.

Sentries (4): hp 385, 353, 367, 362; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

Thunder: hp 395; see statistics in area **T7**.

T4. MALE GIANT BARRACKS (EL VARIABLE)

Three enormous beds, squeezed too close together, occupy most of the available space in this room. It is sparsely decorated and very cluttered—personal items of every sort, from pieces of giant-sized armor to oversized hairbrushes, are strewn over tabletops, shelves, beds, and the floor. Six large chests are also spread around in various spots, each one marked with a large letter in Dwarven script. The pungent odor of sweat is noticeable but not overpowering. Opposite the door, a staircase winds upward along the outer wall.

This room is shared by six of the giants that guard the Great Tower, which partially explains the clutter. Three male sentries at a time sleep and relax here when they are off duty. Each giant has a chest marked with an initial (the Giant language uses the Dwarven script) to store his personal belongings in, but in practice these belongings end up on any available horizontal surface.

Unaware Creatures (EL 22): If no alarm has yet been sounded, three off-duty sentries are resting here.

Off-Duty Sentries (3): hp 371, 403, 378; see statistics in the appendix on page 100. Before these giants get fully armored, they are Spd 50 ft.; AC 28 (touch 16, flat-footed 25); Climb +27, Hide –4, Jump +27. Since they have not had a *heroes' feast* in the last 12 hours, they have attack bonuses of +33/+28/+23 melee and +17/+12/+7 ranged, and do not gain the other benefits of the feast (poison and fear immunity).

Alerted Creatures (EL 0): When the alarm sounds, the three sentries here wake up, put their armor on (which takes 5 minutes) and move to defensive positions: Two go to area **T3**, and the third moves to area **T12**. If the characters come to this room less than 5 minutes after the alarm sounds, the sentries are still here suiting up; see Unaware Creatures above.

Treasure: The scattered personal belongings are mostly worthless, with the exception of coins that amount to 1d6×100 gp.

T5. GUARD HALL

A long, marble-topped table is the central feature in this room. Six matching chairs are scattered around—two apparently in place at the table, squeezed between it and the tower's outer wall, while the other four are haphazardly strewn around the room. Two doors lead into the room at opposite ends.

This room is the common living area for the twelve cloud giants that live in the tower. Most of the time, this room is unoccupied. The giants spend half the day on duty on the rooftop, and most of the remainder in their barracks (areas **T4** and **T6**). They feast at the table 1 hour before their shifts begin, ensuring that they gain all the benefits of the *heroes' feast* for the duration of their watch. If the characters enter the tower by stealth, they find the room empty until an alarm sounds.

Treasure: The table is a half-sized *table of feasting* (the full-sized version seats twelve and is described in the *Stronghold Builder's Guide*). See the "New Magic Items sidebar on page 88 for details.

T6. FEMALE GUARD BARRACKS (EL VARIABLE)

Three enormous beds are squeezed close together along the outside wall of this room. It is sparsely decorated and very cluttered—personal items of every sort, from pieces of giant-sized armor to oversized hairbrushes, are strewn over tabletops, chair seats, beds, and the floor. Six large chests sit on shelves and tables, each one marked with a large letter in Dwarven script.

This room is shared by the six female giants that guard the Great Tower, which partially explains the

clutter. Three female sentries at a time sleep and relax here when they are off duty. Each giant has a chest marked with an initial (the Giant language uses the Dwarven script) to store her personal belongings in, but in practice these belongings end up on any available horizontal surface.

Unaware Creatures (EL 22): If no alarm has yet been sounded, three off-duty sentries are resting here.

Off-Duty Sentries (3): hp 363, 378, 373; see statistics in the appendix on page 100. Before these giants get fully armored, they are Spd 50 ft.; AC 28 (touch 16, flat-footed 25); Climb +27, Hide –4, Jump +27.

Alerted Creatures (EL 0): When the alarm sounds, the three sentries here wake up, put their armor on (which takes 5 minutes) and move to defensive positions: Two go to area **T3**, and the third moves to area **T12**. If the characters come to this room less than 5 minutes after the alarm sounds, the sentries are still here suiting up; see Unaware Creatures above.

Trap (EL 10): On the wall adjacent to area **T2**, a large level protrudes from a mundane-looking box. While it appears mechanical to casual inspection, it is actually a magical trigger to open the force portcullis (T1). The trigger is activated by touching the lever and speaking a command word ("Harrek," which means "lightning" in giant), not by pushing it upward as it appears. A character who pushes the lever upward (which requires a Strength check against DC 25) accomplishes two things: The force portcullis locks and will not open the correct way for 8 hours, and a trap springs.

Imprisonment Trap: CR 10; no attack roll necessary (character entombed in the earth); no saving throw, but SR applies (20th-level caster); Search (DC 34); Disable Device (DC 34).

Treasure: The scattered personal belongings are mostly worthless, with the exception of coins that amount to 1d6×100 gp.

LEVEL TWO

Levels two through four are Thunder's lair and playground. She can move freely between levels through the walls of force covering the central shaft.

Level two seems mostly open, and Thunder at least can move easily around the whole area. However, a circular *wall of force* and a short marble wall serve to divide the room somewhat.

T7. DRAGON'S WATCHPOST (EL 21)

This room offers no interesting features to distract you from its occupant: a dragon the size of a stable. Its hide is covered in translucent scales

that glitter brightly in the sunlight streaming down through a wide skylight above. Its scaled face seems to wear a scornful smile.

Beneath the skylight, a similar aperture opens down to the ground floor below. A marble wall runs from that hole to a door near the tower's outer wall.

This room contains no less than three *wall of force* effects—one covering the "skylight," one covering the hole in the floor, and a large, circular wall providing a defensive position for Thunder. As described in the *Player's Handbook*, a *wall of force* is completely immune to damage and most spells. *Disintegrate* destroys a single *wall of force*, as does a *rod of cancellation*, a *sphere of annihilation*, and *Mordenkainen's disjunction*. Most characters and creatures cannot pass through it (although teleportation spells can bypass it), but force dragons are immune to force effects and pass freely though barriers made of force. Even so, Thunder's breath weapon and spells do not pass through the walls—she must stick her head through a wall to affect a creature on the opposite side of it. In addition, her blindsight does not allow her to perceive creatures on the opposite side of a *wall of force*.

Creature: While the thunderhead remains over Ruvian, Thunder, a young force dragon, is alert and watching the entry below. If she has already attacked characters in the atrium (**T3**), she has begun to get some measure of them. If they come up through the *wall of force* in the floor, she moves to the other side of the large *wall of force*, keeping at least one force wall between herself and the characters as much as possible. If the characters left the atrium and entered the giant barracks (**T4** or **T6**) or the hall (**T5**), she remains inside the circular *wall of force* and watches both the atrium downstairs and the door leading into the stairway on this level, making her almost impossible to surprise.

Thunder, Young Female Force Dragon: CR 21; Gargantuan Dragon; HD 30d12+210; hp 395; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., fly 300 ft. (clumsy); AC 43 (touch 14, flat-footed 43); Atk +41 melee (4d6+14, bite), +35 melee (2d8+7, 2 claws), +35 melee (2d6+7, 2 wings), +35 melee (2d8+21, tail slap); or +40 melee (4d6+21, crush); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.; SA tail sweep 2d6+21 (DC 32), breath weapon (15d12, DC 32), frightful presence (DC 33), spells; SQ immunities, damage reduction 20/+4, blindsight 90 ft., keen senses, deflecting force; SR 31; AL NE; SV Fort +24, Ref +17, Will +25; Str 39, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 26, Wis 27, Cha 26.

Skills: Bluff +38, Concentration +37, Diplomacy +38, Intimidate +40, Jump +44, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (nature) +38, Knowledge (the planes) +38, Knowledge (religion) +38, Listen +38, Scry +38, Search +38, Spellcraft +38, Spot +38, Wilderness Lore +38. *Feats:* Cleave, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Wingover.

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): The force dragon's breath weapon is a 60-foot cone of force that deals 15d12 points of damage to creatures within its effect. A successful Reflex save (DC 32) reduces the damage by half.

SA—Frightful Presence (Ex): The dragon's frightful presence takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 90 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragon. A potentially affected creature that succeeds at a Will save (DC 33) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

SQ—Immunities (Ex): The dragon is immune to sleep and paralysis effects. A force dragon cannot be harmed by any force effect, including *magic missiles*, *explosive runes*, *Mordenkainen's sword*, the *Otiluke's sphere spells*, or any other spell or effect with the [Force] designator. It can move freely through barriers made of force, such as a *wall of force*.

SQ—Keen Senses (Ex): A dragon sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. It also has darkvision with a range of 300 feet.

SQ—Deflecting Force (Su): A force dragon is protected by a shield of force that provides a deflection bonus to its AC. The deflection bonus is equal to the dragon's Charisma bonus.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/8/6; base DC = 18 + spell level; caster level 9th): 0—*arcane mark, daze, detect magic, detect poison, ghost sound, mage hand, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*expeditious retreat, magic missile, shield, silent image, true strike;* 2nd—*cat's grace, darkness, detect thoughts, mirror image;* 3rd—*dispel magic, haste, slow;* 4th—*charm monster, solid fog.*

Tactics: Thunder is almost freakishly intelligent for such a young dragon, and she uses her intelligence to her advantage. As a rule, don't hesitate to use things you know about the PCs against them, even if there's no logical way Thunder could know them: She can guess, and she's usually right. If she has time to prepare for the characters' arrival, she casts *cat's grace* and *expeditious retreat* on herself, then uses *haste* as soon as combat begins in earnest.

Thunder uses the *walls of force* in the stronghold to provide cover—she can attack from behind a wall in such a way as to gain three-quarters cover from her opponents. Since she can move freely through the force walls, they do not grant any cover to her opponents. If she gets badly hurt, she tries to put as many walls between herself and the characters as possible.

On the other hand, if the walls prove to be no serious obstacle to the characters (if they include a sorcerer who knows *disintegrate*, for example), then she tries to lure them outside where she can make better use of her fly speed to fight them.

Wherever the battle takes place, Thunder uses her breath weapon early and often, since it deals serious damage that few characters have any unusual resistance to.

LEVEL THREE

This is the second level of Thunder's "lair."

T8. EMPTY CHAMBER

This room occupies roughly a third of this level of the tower. In one corner, a door leads out to the staircase continuing its way up to the top level. At the tower's center, there is a skylight in the roof, admitting sunlight that must be filtered down through the upper story; below is a gaping hole in the floor. On the other side of the holes, another wall extends ahead, dividing the space beyond into two more rooms.

There is nothing of interest in this room. Thunder uses the space to fight the characters, if necessary, but she normally does not spend any time here. However, if the giants on the roof blew the signal for an attack from above on their *horn of sounding*, Thunder is in this area to protect her hoard against characters coming down from the roof.

Thunder: hp 395; see statistics in area **T7**.

T9. EMPTY CHAMBER (EL VARIABLE)

This room appears to be completely empty.

A wall of force divides this room in two, but that is the room's only interesting feature. Thunder uses this space to fight the characters, using the *wall of force* for cover, but she normally does not spend time here.

If the characters somehow manage to come here without yet having encountered Thunder, allow her a Spot check (Spot +38) to notice them as they cross the *wall of force* in the floor. If she sees characters on this floor, she comes to confront them immediately.

Thunder: hp 395; see statistics in area **T7**.

T10. DRAGON'S NEST (EL VARIABLE)

Unlike the other rooms on this level, this one is clearly lived in. Thousands of coins are piled in a corner, spread large enough to form a dragon's bed. You can actually see a vague impression in the shape of a coiled dragon in the money. Among the coins are scattered dozens of precious items—statuettes, goblets, crowns, scepters, rings—an almost unimaginable amount of wealth. A shield, a waraxe, a staff, and a few other items are also visible in the hoard.

On a somewhat less inspiring note, large spatters of dried blood are visible on the floor, walls, and even the ceiling, 50 feet up.

This is the heart of Thunder's lair, where she spends most of her time when the Storm Lord's Keep is not hovering over an enemy site. A *wall of force* divides this room in two, and every coin of Thunder's hoard is on the far side of the wall from the door opening out from the staircase. Thunder works well with the cloud giants, but she does not trust them.

If the characters somehow manage to come here without yet having encountered Thunder, allow her a Spot check (Spot +38) to notice them as they cross the *wall of force* in the floor. If she sees characters on this floor, she comes to confront them immediately.

Thunder: hp 395; see statistics in area **T7**.

Treasure: Piled in the corner beside the top end of the staircase is Thunder's treasure hoard. The heap contains 20,000 gp and 2,300 pp in coins. A grand total of fifty-one art objects, ranging from ivory statuettes to a ruby-studded ring, are worth a total of 56,100 gp. (This is an average value; if your players insist on cataloguing each item, use Table 7–6 in the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide*.) Finally, there are five magic items: a *tome of clear thought +2*, a *winged shield*, a *rod of flailing*, a *+5 dwarven waraxe*, and a *staff of defense*.

LEVEL FOUR

This is the fourth and final level of Thunder's "lair."

T11. EMPTY CHAMBERS

This floor of the tower is divided into three bare rooms. At the center, a skylight admits sunlight from above, while a hole in the floor lets the light stream down into the lower levels of the tower. There is nothing of interest visible here.

These rooms are usually empty. Thunder uses this space to fight the characters if she absolutely must, but since there are no *walls of force* on this level she would just as soon fight outside in the open if she is forced this high in the tower.

LEVEL FIVE (ROOF)

This is the fifth and top level of the tower. Thunder doesn't claim the roof as part of her lair.

T12. OBSERVATION PLATFORM (EL VARIABLE)

The roof of the tower is wide, flat, and apparently unprotected. Several large piles of boulders are scattered about the area. A staircase descends into the tower at one edge, while a large hole gapes in the floor right in the roof's center.

The roof is covered by a large, hemispherical *wall of force*. A lever next to the descending stair allows a giant to "lower" or "raise" the dome as a move-equivalent action. If the sentries spot characters approaching, two of them operate the lever so that the dome is down when the giants are attacking, and up when the characters are attacking. (The first giant to act lowers the dome, then attacks; four more sentries attack; finally, the last giant attacks and raises the dome.) The characters can circumvent this tactic by readying actions to attack or fly onto the roof when the dome is down.

Unaware Creatures (EL 24): Most of the time, six sentries are on duty here, watching the Lightning Stair, the surrounding clouds, and the sky for any sign of approaching enemies.

Sentries (6): hp 385, 353, 367, 362, 386, 370; see statistics in the appendix on page 100. One of the sentries (the one with 370 hp) also has a *horn of sounding* (see the "New Magic Items" sidebar on page 88).

Alerted Creatures (EL 21): If the sentries spot the characters within 100 feet of the tower, or if the characters use long-range spells to severely damage them before getting close, the giants leave the force dome in place and leave two sentries on the roof with the *horn of sounding*. The other four giants go to area **T3**.

Sentries (2): hp 386, 370; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

THE RUMBLE OF THUNDER (FOUR-MILE STAIR)

The Rumble of Thunder is a staircase four and a half miles long, hence its other name. It climbs more than three miles in altitude to the small tower called Stair's End. It is much steeper than the Lightning Stair: each step is 2 feet high and 22 inches wide. Even Medium-size creatures must use a move-equivalent action to climb each step, or else fly up rather than climbing.

Unlike the Lightning Stair, thunder worms do not avoid the Rumble of Thunder, for it is not as frequently used by the giants. Every 10 minutes (or portion thereof) the characters spend on or near the Four-Mile Stair, there is a 25% chance they encounter either a pod of 1d3+1 thunder worms (40%) or a wing of four white roc riders flying overhead on their mounts (40%). The other 20% of the time, the stairs shudder with a loud rumble of thunder (hence the stairway's more common name), dealing 5d6 points of sonic damage to any character within 20 feet of the stairs (Reflex save DC 19 for half). Characters standing on the stairs when they rumble risk falling from the stairs and into the clouds; a successful Balance check (DC 25) allows a character to keep her feet.

White Roc Riders (EL 21): Unless the characters are well-hidden, the giants or certainly their mounts spot the characters on the stair, circle for a moment, then swoop down to attack.

White Roc Riders (4): hp 333, 305, 331, 337; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

White Rocs (4): hp 271, 249, 245, 239; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

Thunder Worms (EL 22–25): The thunder worms use blindsight to locate and pursue the characters.

Thunder Worms (2–4): hp 696 each; see the sidebar on page 78.

STAIR'S END

The small tower called Stair's End is primarily the roost of the white rocs ridden by the Storm Lord's soldiers. In addition, it is something of a getaway for the Storm Lord himself, and this is where the characters eventually find him.

E1. WHITE ROC AERIE

This read-aloud text describes the appearance of the aerie from outside.

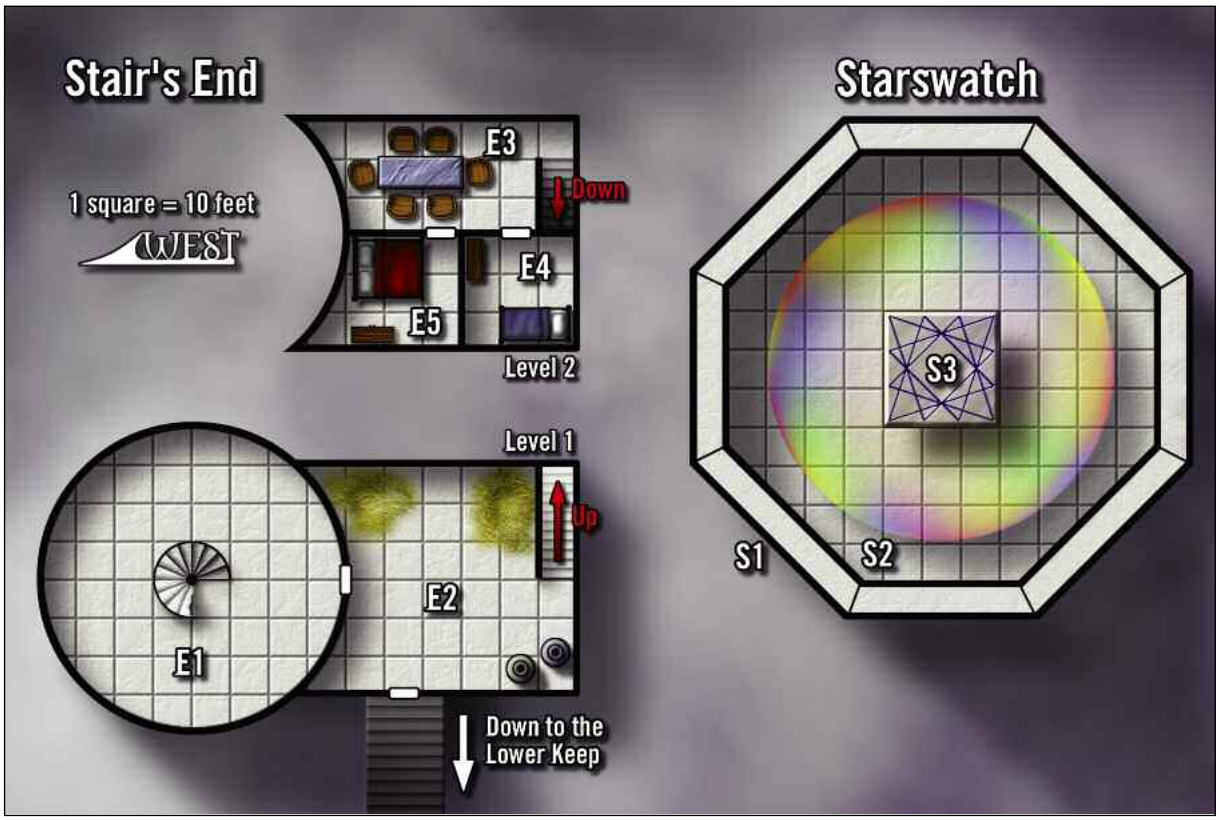
Many large archways breach the walls of this tall, round tower. White feathers are visible inside some of the archways, and the occasional loud squawk from inside betrays the presence of some number of birds or birdlike creatures.

If characters actually enter the aerie, read this text:

Inside, the tower reeks with a pungent, chemical odor. Huge white feathers are everywhere—as are the birds they come from. A spiral staircase winds up the tower's center, while the huge white birds ridden by the giants are everywhere—nesting, squabbling, feeding, sleeping.

This is the roost or aerie for the all of the Storm Lord's white rocs. The tower is 160 feet tall and has eight virtually identical stories (each with a 20-foot roof). Each story has two archways giving the white rocs access to the interior; these archways are 20 feet wide and 15 feet high.

Creatures: Each floor holds 1d3+1 white rocs at any given time, usually crowded quite close together. If anything disturbs them in their roost, the white rocs



fly out of the tower immediately, since the space is too cramped for them to fight in.

White rocs have a CR too low to challenge 21st-level characters.

White Rocs: hp 261 each; see statistics in the appendix on page 100.

E2. BARN

An acrid smell fills this large room. Two large beds of straw are piled on the far wall, and a door to the left leads into the round tower. A staircase runs up along the wall on the right side. A number of shovels, wheelbarrows, and other implements less easy to identify are piled on the floor and, occasionally, leaning against a wall. A pair of large urns stand in the corner just to the right of the door.

This room is exactly what it appears: storage for the various supplies used to care for the white rocs. The urns hold a mixture of grain and cow's blood that supplements the rocs' hunting diet.

Creatures: The piles of straw serve as beds to the two adolescent cloud giants that live here and tend the aerie. These two boys, Yuni and Guri, are shy and awkward, and flee from the player characters (heading up the stairs if they can) at the earliest opportunity. They are not a reasonable challenge for 21st-level characters.

If the characters fight Yuni and Guri, the Storm Lord hears the noise and descends the stairs in a fury to give the characters someone their own size to pick on.

Yuni and Guri, Male Adolescent Cloud Giants: CR 10; Large Giant (Air); HD 13d8+52; hp 110, 107; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 22 (touch 10, flat-footed 21); Atk +19/+14 melee (2d6+15, Huge club) or +10/+5 ranged (2d6+10, rock); SA rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ *heroes' feast*, rock catching, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 31, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +14, Jump +14, Listen +7, Spot +7. *Feats:* Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 pounds) and *obscuring mist*; 1/day—*fog cloud*. Caster level 15th; save DC = 11 + spell level.

SA—*Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adolescent cloud giants can hurl rocks weighing 40–50 pounds each (Small objects) with a range increment of 120 feet and a maximum range of 5 range increments.

Heroes' Feast: Yuni and Guri join the Storm Lord for three *heroes' feasts* every day, thanks to the *table of feasting* located in area **E3**. This makes them immune to poison and to magical fear and hopelessness, and grants them a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls (included in the statistics above) and saving throws against nonmagical fear effects.

SA—*Rock Catching (Ex):* An adolescent cloud giant can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or pro-

jectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would normally be hit by a rock can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium-size one, and 25 for a Large one. (If the projectile has a magical bonus to attack, the DC increases by that amount.) The giant must be ready for and aware of the attack.

E3. DINING ROOM (EL 26)

The room at the top of the stairs is dominated by a large marble-topped table, neatly set with oversized plates and silverware and gigantic goblets. Six chairs are pulled close to the table. A door leads out of the room to the left of the table.

This room serves as the Storm Lord's dining area while he spends time at Stair's End, and as something of a conference room when he wants to meet with his subordinates. The table is a six-person *table of feasting*, of course, which provides all of the Storm Lord's meals.

Creatures: Unless the characters entered the building in complete silence and did not alert the boys downstairs, the Storm Lord waits for them in this room, invisible (thanks to his *ring of invisibility*). He stands near the door to **E5**, ready for action in case the characters attack him. If they do not see him and leap into melee, he calmly speaks when they enter the room, inviting them to have a seat at the table. His voice is low and thunderous, but his accent is refined and his grammar perfect, if occasionally archaic.

If the characters are willing to sit down and talk with the Storm Lord, he returns the favor, dropping his invisibility and joining them at the table, even conjuring up a *heroes' feast* to show his good will. Without saying anything about the chichimec, he is willing to explain anything about the current situation, emphasizing that he wants to restore his daughter to life out of love for her.

The Storm Lord has trained himself to keep the secret of the chichimec on pain of death and ruin, and no simple *detect thoughts* can pry that secret from his brain.

If the characters attack him or refuse to sit and talk with him, he is perfectly willing to fight them and does so vigorously. He begins combat with *greater dispelling*—though it has little hope of defeating spells the characters have cast on themselves, it could suppress a spell effect derived from a wand or other magic item. After that, he uses as much firepower as he can muster (to the tune of five *prismatic sprays*) while keeping open the option of *teleporting* away if things go poorly. If the characters kill him before he has a chance to escape, he takes the dramatic opportunity to chide them with his last breath: "You fools . . ."

The Storm Lord, Male Cloud Giant Sor15: CR 26; Huge Giant (Air); HD 17d8+119 (cloud giant) plus 15d4+105 (Sor); hp 337; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 34 (touch 13, flat-footed 33); Atk +31/+26/+21 melee (4d6+19 plus 1d6 electricity plus 1d10 electricity and 1d8 sonic, *Gargantuan +3 thundering shocking burst morningstar*); or +18/+13/+8 ranged (2d8+11, rock); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.; SA rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ electricity resistance 30 (from crown), sonic resistance 10 (from Energy Resistance epic feat), fast healing 3 (from Fast Healing epic feat), rock catching, *heroes' feast*, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +24, Ref +13, Will +18; Str 32, Dex 12, Con 25, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 26.

Skills: Climb +15, Concentration +35, Hide –7, Jump +15, Listen +4, Ride (white roc) +8, Scry +18, Spellcraft +31, Spot +6. *Feats:* Alertness, Cleave, Combat Casting, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack.

Epic Feats: Energy Resistance (sonic), Fast Healing, Improved Combat Casting, Spell Stowaway (haste).

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 pounds) and *obscuring mist*; 1/day—*fog cloud*. Caster level 15th; save DC 18 + spell level.

SA—Rock Throwing (Ex): Adult giants are accomplished rock throwers and receive a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls when throwing rocks. A cloud giant can hurl rocks weighing 60 to 80 pounds each (Medium-size objects) with a range increment of 140 feet and a maximum range of 5 range increments.

SQ—Rock Catching (Ex): A cloud giant can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would normally be hit by a rock can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium-size one, and 25 for a Large one. (If the projectile has a magical bonus to attack, the DC increases by that amount.) The giant must be ready for and aware of the attack.

Heroes' Feast: The Storm Lord enjoys three *heroes' feasts* every day, thanks to the *table of feasting* located in area **E3**. This makes him immune to poison and to magical fear and hopelessness, and grants him a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls (included in the statistics above) and saving throws against nonmagical fear effects.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/8/8/7/7/5; base DC 18 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, flare, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*endure elements, expeditious retreat, protection from good, shield, true strike;* 2nd—*bull's strength, endurance, resist elements, see invisibility, shatter;* 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, gust of wind, haste, lightning bolt;* 4th—*detect scrying, dimension door, ice storm, scrying;* 5th—*cone of cold, dominate person, mind fog, teleport;* 6th—*acid fog, chain lightning, greater dispelling;* 7th—*limited wish, prismatic spray.*

Possessions: Gargantuan +3 thundering shocking burst morningstar, bracers of armor +8, cloak of Charisma +6, ring of invisibility, winged boots, crown of the Storm Lord (see the "New Magic Items" sidebar on page 88).

Development: If the Storm Lord dies, with no heirs to assume his title, the divine prison that has held fast for over a thousand years is sundered, and the chichimec it held flies free. The repercussions are felt immediately in Stair's End; read the following text to the players.

As the Storm Lord utters his last breath, something seems to snap. Twin flashes of lightning erupt from below, tearing up through the floor to consume the giant's corpse. The accompanying thunderclaps shake the foundation of this building, and it actually seems to sink into the cloud as much as a hundred feet. The rumble of thunder continues, seeming to focus its energy somewhere above you, perhaps at the very top of the cloud.

Characters standing on the floor when the building shakes must make a successful Balance check (DC 25) or fall prone. Flying characters take 5d6 points of damage as the building shakes wildly around them, battering them with against the walls and ceiling (a successful Reflex save, DC 25, reduces the damage by half).

If the characters do not travel to Starswatch within 39 minutes, the chichimec goes free and begins its rampage through Ruvian and the other human lands below. Regardless, over the course of the next 2d6 hours, the thunderhead dissipates and the buildings of the Storm Lord's keep plummet from the sky. (Assume that they land in relatively empty fields, causing some property damage but no loss of life.) With the chichimec freed, the keep no longer has any reason to exist, and the divine magic that formed and sustained it unravels.

E4. DAUGHTER'S CHAMBER

A dresser and a bed are the only features in this room. A cloud giant woman lies on her back in the bed, carrying clear marks of battle. She clutches a greatsword to her breast, and a shield lies at her feet, but sheets and blankets are tucked around her as though she were merely sleeping.

The body, of course, belongs to the Storm Lord's daughter, whose soul is entrapped within the gem Elina carries. Every week or so, one of the clerics from the Temple of the Storm comes up here to cast *gentle repose* on the body, preserving not just the corpse but also the Storm Lord's hope that she can be restored to life.

The greatsword and shield are both giant-sized masterwork items. The dresser is empty.

E5. THE STORM LORD'S CHAMBER

A fine, enormous bed lies just to the right of the door. Hanging on the wall just opposite the door is a silver mirror, and a large dresser stands beside the mirror. The bed is neatly made and currently unoccupied. No other decoration or ornament adorns the room.

The Storm Lord spends most of his time in the Lower Keep, holding audiences in the Hall of Thunder and sleeping in a suite near it. During an attack like the one on Ruvian, however, he retreats to this simple bedchamber for solitude and relative safety, and he has lived here much more often since the death of his daughter.

The Storm Lord himself probably encounters the characters in area **E3**. This room contains a smattering of personal possessions: 45 pp, 197 gp, three topaz gemstones worth 500 gp each, an ivory comb worth 75 gp, a silk robe (sized for a Huge creature) worth 245 gp, a warm fur blanket, and a small selection of blue and gray tunics and togas.

STARSWATCH

Starswatch is the heart of the prison that holds the chichimec, Phaulkon's dark secret and the reason for both the Storm Lord and his keep to exist at all. Its name comes from the fact that its incredible altitude (6 1/2 miles above the ground) offers spectacular stargazing to anyone willing to fly to the top of the tower.

THE SUNDERED PRISON (EL 21)

If the characters kill the Storm Lord, the imprisonment-like effect holding the chichimec within the cloud ends, and the abomination appears on the platform in area **S3**. It immediately moves through the *prismatic sphere*, suffering no ill effects thanks to the combination of its spell resistance and its high saving throws. Once free from the sphere, the chichimec summons an elder air elemental and sets it to work on breaking through the wall of the tower. Dealing average damage of 18 points with each blow (reduced by the hardness of the mithral and the magically treated stone), the air elemental finally breaks through a section of wall after 39 minutes. At that point, the chichimec and its summoned elemental descend to Stair's End, then down the Rumble of Thunder to the Lower Keep, where they wreak havoc on any giants left alive. The chichimec summons another elemental when its first summoned elemental returns whence it came (1 hour after it was summoned). If the characters do not intercept it at some point, it slays every surviving creature on the thunderhead (even as the thunderhead dissipates and the keep falls to the ground), then makes its way farther down to do the same in Ruvian.

If the characters enter Starswatch before the air elemental has had time to batter through the walls, they encounter the chichimec inside the tower, in area **S2**. If they come to Starswatch more than 39 minutes after the Storm Lord's death, a 10-foot by 10-foot section of wall is broken through, and the chichimec is nowhere around. (They might encounter it between Stair's End and Starswatch, or even on their way back down toward the Lower Keep.) If the Storm Lord is still alive when they come to Starswatch, the abomination is still imprisoned (see area **S3**).

The chichimec looks like a clump of madly flapping, fluttering, scrabbling feathered wings, about 4 feet in diameter. A single long tail trails behind the creature from the center of its body. Its color is mostly pale white, with some bluish-white areas. Unless slain and dissected, the tiny mouths, eyes, and other sensory organs dotting its body trunk cannot be seen.

Chichimec: hp 405; see *Epic Level Handbook*.

Unless 3 hours have passed since the chichimec's release by the time the characters find the abomination, it is accompanied by an elder air elemental when they do encounter it. It summons more (to its maximum of three per day) at the beginning of an encounter with the characters.

S1. THE TOWER

Eight smooth walls of burnished mithral form an octagonal tower at the highest point of the thunderhead, miles above the earth. Ever-changing patterns of frost form on the smooth metal walls, shifting with the wind. The tower stands around 250 feet high, and above that point is nothing but clear sky. There is no visible entrance to the tower, however.

Those giants that come all the way up Starswatch do so to stargaze at the top of the tower, and they have learned not to ask questions about the purpose of the tower or how to get in. It is not designed to be entered. The thick walls are made up of two 6-inch-thick mithral layers surrounding 8 feet of magically treated, reinforced masonry—the same marble used elsewhere in the keep. These thick, layered walls are virtually impossible (DC 285) to break with a single Strength check.

Mithral Layers: 6 inches thick, hardness 15; hp 180; AC 5; Climb DC 70.

Magically Treated, Reinforced Masonry Walls: 8 feet thick, hardness 16; hp 2,880; AC 5.

In addition, the tower is warded by a *forbiddance* spell, making it impossible to *teleport* into the tower without first dispelling the *forbiddance*. The spell was placed by a 20th-level caster. It is also protected by a permanent *false vision* spell that presents the appearance of a dingy,

deserted, circular stone tower when a character tries to *scry* on the inside of the tower by any means.

S2. THE TOWER INTERIOR

The interior of the tower is a hollow column stretching up the full 250 feet to the roof. The inside is garishly lit by a gigantic globe of shimmering, multicolored light that hangs suspended in the middle of the tower. The sphere comes within 10 feet of the sides of the tower at its widest, and its bottom is about 80 feet up from the ground.

The multicolored sphere is a special *prismatic sphere* altered to provide a protective barrier for the prison inside, and to be much larger than a typical sphere. The sphere has a caster level of 25, but otherwise works exactly like a normal *prismatic sphere*. Its save DC is 25.

S3. PRISON PLATFORM

Floating in the middle of where the shimmering sphere was, there is a flat, square platform made of mithral. Traced on the platform is a starlike pattern, carved lightly into the metal and set off with rich blue lapis lazuli.

The prison platform is the effect of a variation on the *imprisonment* spell, which holds (or held) the chichimec magically bound within the thunderhead. If the chichimec is still *imprisoned* (because the Storm Lord is still alive), the platform radiates an overwhelming aura of Abjuration magic; otherwise it radiates a dim aura for 1d6 days after the chichimec's release. A *freedom* spell cast on the platform releases the chichimec, even without knowledge of its name or history.

Carved into the lapis lazuli inlay on the platform is a tiny inscription. A successful Search check (DC 40) lets a character notice that there is an inscription, but not to make out the almost microscopic script. A *lens of detection* or a *true seeing* spell enables a character to read the inscription, however. In the Celestial language it reads, "What Phaulkon hath bound, let the Storm Lord keep bound and no mortal sunder. So shall this abomination be chained for as long as the storm doth rage."

A bard or loremaster can make a bardic knowledge or lore check against DC 30 to recall legends associated with the word "abomination." According to these legends, sometimes horrible offspring are produced from divine liaisons; they are usually banished or imprisoned, accursed and outcast from divine and mortal society alike. Such creatures are immensely powerful, of course, carrying at least some tiny spark of divinity within their misshapen frames. Identifying Phaulkon as the deity of air and clouds is a trivial Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10).

Casting *legend lore* or *vision* while on or near the prison platform gives some information in the form of a vaguely cryptic poem:

Rotten fruit of godly seed, imprisoned here in shame
lest the chichimec be freed and smear a godly name.
Bloodline of the Storm Lord bound the offspring in its cell,
[if the Storm Lord is dead:]
cell doors open at the sound of the lord's death knell.
[if the Storm Lord is alive:]
if his offspring can be found, then all might turn out well.

CONCLUSION

How the adventure draws to a close depends largely on how the characters choose to deal with the Storm Lord. If they kill him and then deal with the chichimec, then no foes remain: they can return to Ruvian (where they are hailed as epic heroes) and help the villagers rebuild, or move on their way. If they parley with the Storm Lord and learn the circumstances of his daughter's death, they might be able to help him locate the gem that contains her soul (among Elina's possessions, whether she is alive or dead) and persuade him to leave settled lands once again. In this case, the secret of the chichimec could remain intact, unknown even to the characters.

APPENDIX: RECURRING GIANT STATISTICS

These statistics describe various giant sentries, guards, and soldiers found in multiple areas within the Storm Lord's Keep. In addition, the white roc statistics block is presented here with the white roc rider.

Shared Abilities: All the cloud giants in this adventure have certain special abilities in common, including rock throwing, rock catching, and a handful of spell-like abilities.

Rock Throwing (Ex): Adult giants are accomplished rock throwers and receive a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls when throwing rocks. A cloud giant can hurl rocks weighing 60 to 80 pounds each (Medium-size objects) with a range increment of 140 feet and a maximum range of 5 range increments.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 pounds) and *obscuring mist*; 1/day—*fog cloud*. Caster level 15th; save DC = Cha modifier + spell level.

Rock Catching (Ex): A cloud giant can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would normally be hit by a rock can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium-size one, and 25 for a Large one. (If the pro-

jectile has a magical bonus to attack, the DC increases by that amount.) The giant must be ready for and aware of the attack.

White Roc Rider, Male and Female Cloud Giant Ftr6: CR 17; Huge Giant (Air); HD 17d8+153 (cloud giant) plus 6d10+54; hp by individual (see encounter description); Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 40, touch 9, flat-footed 39; Atk +34/+29/+24 melee (2d8+20/19–20/×3, *Huge +4 heavy lance*) or +30/+25/+20 melee (2d8+15, *Huge +1 light flail*); or +18/+13/+8 ranged (2d8+14, rock); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.; SA rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., rock catching, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +23, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 38, Dex 15, Con 29, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +12, Hide –12, Jump +12, Listen +10, Ride (white roc) +26, Spot +11. *Feats:* Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (heavy lance), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (heavy lance), Weapon Specialization (heavy lance)

Possessions: +5 full plate, +4 large steel shield, Huge +4 heavy lance, Huge +1 light flail, 2 potions of fly (1 already used when encountered flying).

White Roc, Half-dragon (white)/Half-roc: CR 11; Gargantuan Dragon; HD 18d12+144; hp by individual (see encounter description); Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Atk +25 melee (2d6+16, 2 claws), +20 melee (2d8+8, bite); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 40 ft./10 ft.; SA snatch, breath weapon; SQ low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., immune to sleep, paralysis, and cold; AL CE; SV Fort +19, Ref +13, Will +7; Str 42, Dex 15, Con 26, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Intuit Direction +10, Listen +21, Spot +21*. *Feats:* Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Wingover

SA—*Snatch (Ex):* A white roc that hits a creature of at least Small size, but no larger than Huge, with a claw attack attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the roc achieves a hold, it can fly off with its prey and automatically make a bite attack each round in lieu of a claw attack. It can drop a snatched creature as a free action or use a standard action to fling it aside.

A flung creature travels 90 feet and takes 9d6 points of dam-age. If the roc flings it while flying, the creature suffers this amount of damage or falling damage, whichever is greater.

SA—*Breath Weapon (Su):* Once per day, a white roc can breathe a 30-foot cone of icy cold. Creatures within the cone suffer 3d6 points of damage (Reflex save DC 27 for half). As a special exception to the normal rules for the half-dragon template, the DC of this saving throw is based on the white roc's Hit Dice and Constitution modifier.

Skills: *White rocs receive a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks during daylight hours.

Sentries, Male and Female Cloud Giant Ftr 8: CR 19; Huge giant (Air); HD 17d8+170 (giant) plus 8d10+80 (Ftr); hp by individual (see encounter description); Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 38, touch 14, flat-footed 37; Atk +36/+31/+26 melee (4d6+28/17–20/×2 +1d6 and Fort save [DC 39] or die, *Gargantuan +3 speed greatsword*); or +20/+15/+10 ranged (2d8+14, rock); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.; SA rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., rock catching, scent, *heroes' feast*; AL NE; SV Fort +27, Ref +13, Will +12; Str 38, Dex 16, Con 30, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10 .

Skills: Climb +21, Hide –10, Jump +21, Listen +11, Ride (white roc) +11, Spot +11. *Feats:* Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (greatsword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Epic Feats: Devastating Critical (greatsword), Epic Weapon Focus (greatsword), Epic Weapon Specialization (greatsword), Overwhelming Critical (greatsword)

Heroes' Feast: The sentries enjoy a *heroes' feast* every day before their shift, thanks to the *tables of feasting* located in their residences. This makes them immune to poison and to magical fear and hopelessness, and grants them a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls (included in the statistics above) and saving throws against nonmagical fear effects.

Possessions: Gargantuan +3 speed greatsword, +4 heavy fortification full plate, ring of protection +5, bracers of health +2, eyes of the eagle, cloak of resistance +2. Ω

STORM DOMAIN

Note: The Storm domain is reproduced from the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Campaign Setting.*

Granted Power: You gain electricity resistance 5.

Storm Domain Spells

1 *Entropic shield*
2 *Gust of wind*
3 *Call lightning*
4 *Sleet storm*
5 *Ice storm*
6 *Summon monster* VI (air spell only)
7 *Control weather*
8 *Whirlwind*
9 *Storm of vengeance*

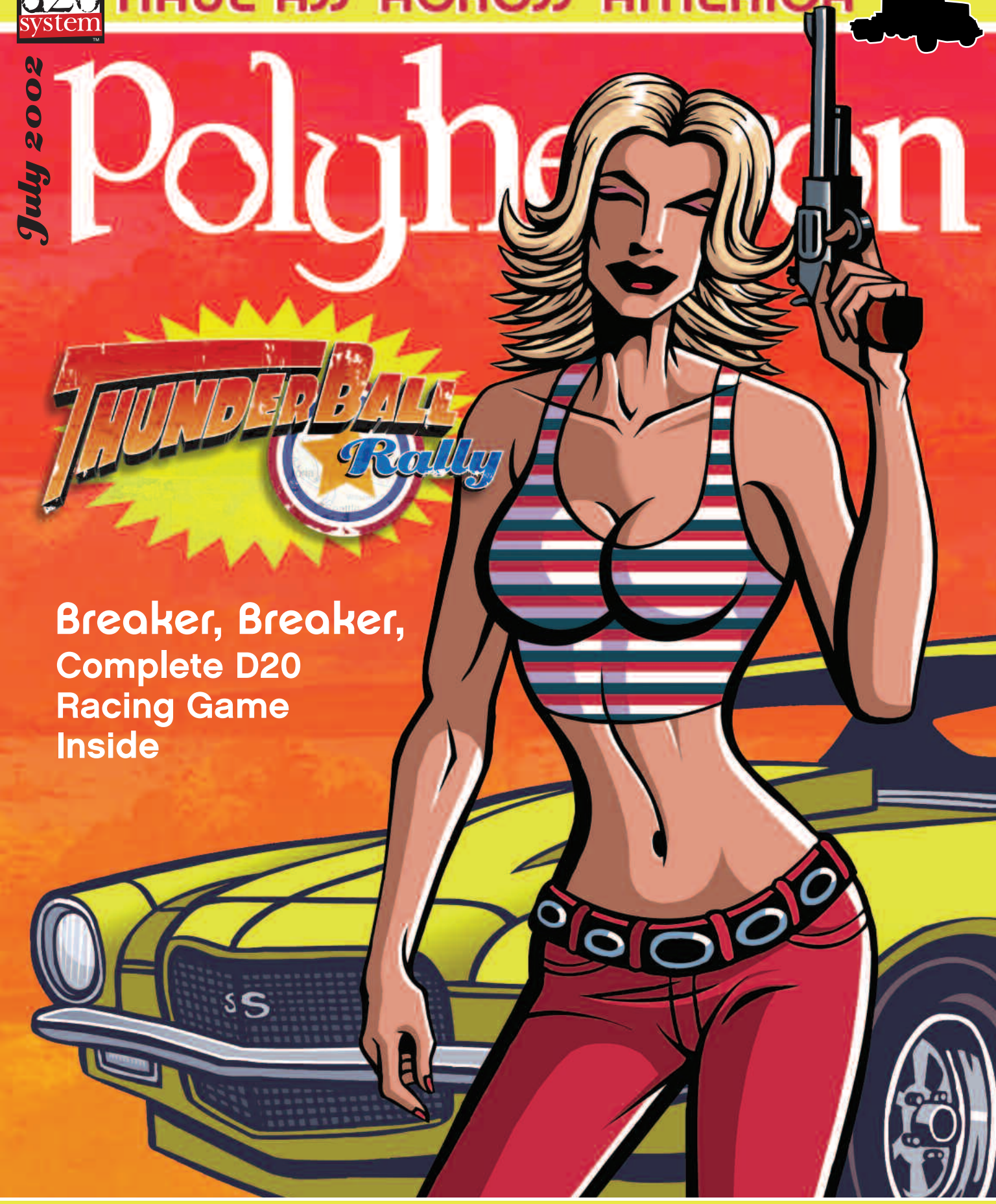
James was recently described by another member of Wizards of the Coast's staff as "a really twisted monkey." He thinks he likes that.

d20 system

HAUL ASS ACROSS AMERICA

July 2002

Polyhedron



Breaker, Breaker, Complete D20 Racing Game Inside

#152 Don't Fear the Repo!

RPGA NETWORK

Out with the Old

A couple of days before we sent this issue to press, Necromancer Games proudly announced the late-2002 publication of *Tome of Horrors*, a gargantuan hardcover set to include more than 450 complete d20 System monsters, more than 300 of which will be conversions of existing creatures from the first two editions of Dungeons & Dragons. That's exciting to me personally not only because I'll finally have some rock-solid d20 stats for flumphs and adherers, but also because I'm hoping its comprehensive approach makes it the last of its kind.

Don't get me wrong. The project stems from the online *Creature Catalog*, a subset of the EN World supersite (www.enworld.org) that serves as the strongest backbone of d20 System fandom on the Internet. Its compiler, Scott Greene, has stalwartly cataloged conversions of D&D's "lesser" stars (and some frankly cool "quirky" creatures that didn't quite make the *Monster Manual* cut) since the release of Third Edition. The publication of this work is a nice capstone to an awful lot of work on behalf of Greene and his able assistants. It'll also include a large number of original creatures, and new monsters (particularly those designed with as much rules savvy as Greene's team must have by now) are certainly welcome behind my GM screen.

That said, enough already.

A new edition of the game of course means a return to certain familar concepts. Wizards of the Coast has followed the three core rule books with revamps of nearly every First Edition hardcover imaginable, from *Deities & Demigods* to *Oriental Adventures* to *Manual of the Planes* to *Monster Manual 2*. Necromancer promises "Third Edition rules, First Edition feel" in all their releases. Nearly every d20 company in the industry has had good success packaging up standard sword and sorcery that attempts to appeal to the same folks whose shelves are loaded with ratty Greyhawk, Forgotten Realms, Mystara, and Birthright game books. There's been a lot of "going back to the well" on everyone's behalf, and why not? The water's pretty darn good.

It's also pretty darn familiar. The d20 industry will enter its third year about the time you read this. In that time it seems to me that we've gotten about a thousand products suitable for standard D&D, but surprisingly few products that attempt to push the standard genre or, even more enticingly, create new ones.

Fantasy Flight has led the conceptual charge with the space-fantasy *Dragonstar*. Avalanche has pulled their weight with more real-world historical campaign settings than most folks imagined possible, and Green Ronin (among a host of others) has a superhero game waiting in the wings. AEG's *Spycraft* is probably the most ambitious d20 offering to date, but even that game covers thematic ground familiar way back in the era of Top Secret and the *James Bond* RPG. Existing games such as *Fading Suns* and *Deadlands* have seen rebirths in the d20 System, but in terms of wholly original creative departures, unless you're into dragons in space or historical realism or superspies, you're pretty much out of luck.

I know swords and sorcery is a popular genre. I know we're a clannish lot who love our fantasy trappings and complain about how Peter Jackson cheated us by not including Fatty Bolger in the *Lord of the Rings*. I know all that. But let's step back for a minute and think about this hobby of ours.

When we create a campaign, every one of us becomes an artistic god. We piece together fantastic imaginary worlds filled with magical treasures, cunning heroes, and dastardly villains. This is an essentially limitless endeavor, creativity hindered only by our experiences and inspirations. For some reason, though, most of us inhabit these worlds with elves, gnomes, halflings, and half-orcs, largely because that's how we've all done it for ages.

Inertia is a poor justification for falling back on time-worn standbys and genre clichés. Sure, the majority love elves and won't buy your product if it doesn't meet the ear-point quota. But I'm betting there are others out there who, like me, are sick to death of elves, and who are looking for something new, something fresh, to bring to their game table.

They're not going to find that in a new version of the *Wilderness Survival Guide*. They probably aren't going to find it in a book with 300 monsters from previous editions of the game. But I predict they will find it in a d20 System product some time in the next two years. Whether or not a publisher decides to take that leap is largely a matter of faith that this or that unpublished manuscript or setting proposal is innovative and artistically exciting enough to be worth the gamble. That it's so good its worth publishing more than the umpteenth conversion of a monster first imagined before many current players were born.

That takes guts. It'll probably be a while before it happens. Until then, you'll find me reading over my *Tome of Horrors*, wondering what's coming out next.

Erik Mona
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PS: I'm not 100% convinved that games featuring a coast-to-coast race against the backdrop of Bicentennial America is the genre to beat standard fantasy, but the *Thunderball Rally* Mini-Game in this issue struck me as an interesting way to preview the vehicle rules for the forthcoming d20 Modern *Roleplaying Game*. I hope you agree.

PPS: Next issue I make a complete hypocrite of myself by dipping back in a gaming well that's already been revisited a half-dozen times. Be back in 60 days, when Gamma World goes Omega.

First Watch

Previews, notes & news on the world of d20 gaming

Enter: Genetech

In December, Wizards of the Coast brings the d20 System to the modern world with d20 Modern, *a 320-page hardcover written by Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, and Rich Redman. This issue's Mini-Game,* Thunderball Rally, *is a preview of the vehicle rules set to debut in that release. In addition to providing all the rules you'll need to drive modern campaigns,* d20 Modern *will contain four "campaign models," distinct settings sure to meet your modern RPG jones, no matter your tastes.*

One of these models is Shadow Chasers, *which we previewed in* Polyhedron #150. *Another is* Genetech, *which you've probably never heard of.*

Until now.

Genetech Background

In 1953, Chemie Grünenthal synthesized thalidomide in West Germany. A sedative, thalidomide was available in some places until mid-1962.

Unfortunately, not only did a percentage of users develop peripheral neuritis, but it also caused startling deformities in fetuses. Untold numbers died, and many continue to suffer from the effects.

The reaction of the United States government to the tragedy was an increased interest in genetic research. If thalidomide could cross the placental wall and affect infants *in uteri*, perhaps other methods could influence the development of embryos positively. Secretly, departments within the National Institute of Health (NIH) and the Department of Energy (DOE) began identifying the approximately 30,000 genes in human DNA, determining the sequence of the 3 billion chemical base pairs that make up human DNA, and developing tools to address the impact of ecological disasters on citizens. All over the world, wealthy nations followed suit. By 1970, every major world power was involved in a highly secret "gene race."

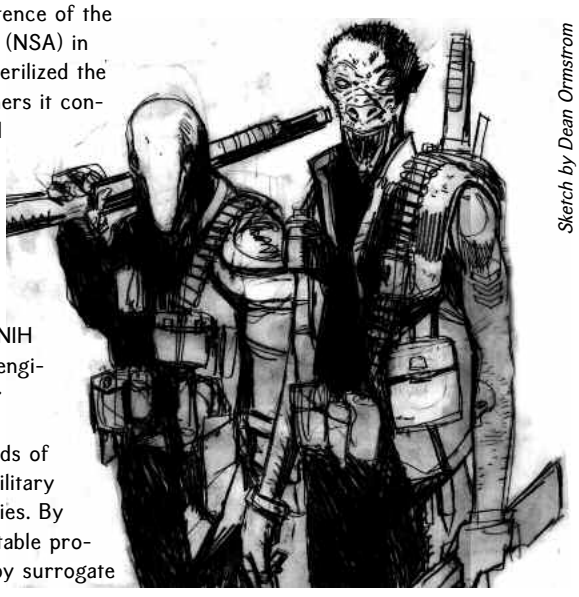
The desperate need for the results of this research surfaced time and again, as the hazards of chemical landfills surfaced in places like the Love Canal neighborhood of Niagara Falls, New York; as the pesticide dioxin proved so harmful to the environment; and as the defoliant Agent Orange proved to cause cancer. Meanwhile the military and intelligence communities took a keen interest in the idea of growing super soldiers or perfect spies.

In 1997, embryologist Ian Wilmut and colleagues at the Roslin Institute in Scotland publicly announced the successful cloning of Dolly, a sheep. US President Bill Clinton issued a moratorium on the use of federal funds for human cloning research. The same government that hid the existence of the National Security Agency (NSA) in black budget line items, sterilized the mentally retarded and others it considered "undesirable," and denied treatment for syphilis to 399 African-American males, continued its research without public knowledge or scrutiny.

The primary focus of NIH research was genetically engineering healthier, smarter human beings. The DOE focused on quicker methods of producing tools for the military and intelligence communities. By 1985, both projects had stable prototypes brought to term by surrogate mothers. At small, secret bases around the nation, they began raising and training their creations. Similar events happened behind the scenes, around the world. The genetically engineered characters found in *Genetech* are the first generation of adults raised from the first stable genetic creations.

In the early years of the 21st Century, the world reeled when news media sources flashed images of Macedonian human-animal hybrids unleashed on ethnically Albanian rebels in the northern hills. Questions over how Macedonia could afford the products of such expensive research swiftly followed, and many feared the new genetic world super powers were using regional conflicts to test their creations. In the United States, a groundswell of public opinion rushed the passage of the honorable Mr. Weldon's legislation prohibiting genetic experimentation on human beings. The media quickly dubbed the hybrids "moreaus," from H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. When the Israelis revealed a generation of genetically engineered soldiers, the media coined the term "frank," derived from Frankenstein's monster.

The genie was out of the bottle.



Sketch by Dean Ormstrom

Release Roundup

As the summer convention season heats up, more and more d20 System publishers have entered the fray. Here are a few of the more interesting releases for July and August.

Alderac Entertainment Group

A few months back, AEG released *Spycraft*, a modern-day espionage hardcover RPG, to glowing reviews. July sees the release of the *Shadowforce Archer Campaign Setting*, which pits psychic superspies against an immense international conspiracy that makes the Cold War look like the Gulf War. AEG promises wire-fu combat abilities, "hyper-modern" prestige classes, new psychic and mystic powers, and a campaign setting charged with double agents, traitors, paranoia, and a whole lot of explosions. Take a peek at the free online preview of the game, *Spycraft Lite*, at www.spycraftrpg.com.

Atlas Games

It's been almost 30 years since RPGs were invented, and while mid-European and even Asian fantasy has been explored time and again, campaign settings based on the lore and history of Africa are few and far between. In August, Atlas brings the d20 System to the so-called "Dark Continent" with *Nyambe: African Adventures*, by Chris Dolunt.

The 256-page hardcover campaign setting retails for $37.95 and comes packed with six variant nonhuman character races, new spins on traditional core classes, feats such as Ancestral Blessing, Drum Dancer, Elephant Warrior and others, and dozens of new skills, weapons, armor, and equipment suitable for adventuring in a world analagous to ancient Africa.

Avalanche Press

Africa not your thing? How about Mexico? Avalanche Press plans to release *Terror of the Aztecs*, a 64-page campaign setting detailing pre-colonial Mexico, in August. Stuffed with new skills, feats, and prestige classes, *Terror* is just the latest in a line of products with deep and intriguing ties to historical fact. To find them in your local game store, naturally, look for the covers featuring enormous hooters.

Citizen Games

In August, Citizen Games brings some female intuition to an industry loaded with books about amazons written by guys. *Way of the Witch*, a 128-page softcover sourcebook (retail price: $19.95), features the usual assemblage of prestige classes, spells, and feats, but with one intriguing difference.

All four of the authors are women. Christina Stiles (*SpirosBlaak* d20 campaign setting) and Megan Robertson (the RPGA's Living Force campaign) join industry veterans Jean Rabe (former RPGA coordinator, *Dragonlance* novelist) and Janet Pack (*Dragonlance* fiction) to provide a decidedly female perspective on all things witchy.

Fantasy Flight Games

Fantasy Flight's 176-page character class sourcebooks continue with *Path of Magic*, a massive collection of supplementary material useful to players of wizards, sorcerers, or bards. Check this issue's Improved Initiative column for a taste of "legendary classes," a sort of super-prestige class type that returns in this product and that will appear in the following volumes, *Path of Faith* and *Path of Shadow*, to be released later this year.

Goodman Games

In all of the d20 Industry, you're unlikely to find anything as weird as *Broncosaurus Rex*, a far-future campaign setting that mixes elements of the American Civil War, a planet loaded with dinosaurs, and a dash of Old West sensibility. Goodman launches a new series of dinosaur sourcebooks in July with the *Complete Guide to Velociraptors*, a 32-page sourcebook that retails for $11.00. The book offers essays on velociraptor culture and, best of all, includes rules for playing velociraptor characters. *A Complete Guide to Tyrannosaurus Rex* will follow later this year. We're guessing T-Rexes make decent fighters.

Green Ronin Publishing

Green Ronin has been a d20 System industry leader since the inception of the license. Most of their products are 90-100% "Open Content," which essentially means that other publishers can

Bolt and Quiver by Stan!

incorporate that material into their own designs. Now, the folks from Freeport are set to work the license the other way around with the *Pocket Grimoires*, two 256-page trade paperback collections consisting of every single spell from the *Player's Handbook* in addition to more than 100 new spells from a variety of d20 System products by a variety of publishers.

Pocket Grimoire Arcane features spells suitable for assassins, bards, sorcerers, or wizards, while *Pocket Grimoire Divine* features spells for adepts, blackguards, clerics, druids, paladins, and rangers. Each volume retails for $14.95, and should be available now from quality retailers.

Malhavoc Press

Need to shake up your home campaign? Check out *Requiem for a God*, a new "event book" by *Dungeon Master's Guide* author Monte Cook. The book covers the ramifications of a divine death with campaign ideas, feats, organizations, prestige classes, and more. Visit montecook.com for more information.

Mongoose Publishing

Mongoose is set to release a staggering 13 products in July and August, including more *"Quintessential"* class and race books (elves and dwarves), a spate of *Slayer's Guides* (orcs, medusas, and "rules lawyers"), a couple *Encyclopedia* tomes (elementalism and fey magic) and even an all-new "celtic high fantasy" d20 RPG set in the universe of the *Slaine* comic series from the UK's *2000 AD* magazine.

Mystic Eye Games

Last month, Mystic Eye teamed with Ambient, a popular online pdf publisher, to produce printed versions of products previously available only online. In August, they do it again, only this time they've partnered with Natural 20 Press, the d20 System online publishing imprint of EN World (www.enworld.org), the most active community of d20 System fans and publishers on the Internet.

The first printed product to come from this association is *Wild Spellcraft*, a compendium of information on highly chaotic, "risky" magic written by Ryan Nock. The book promises two new prestige classes and extensive rules for dealing with the repercussions of wild magical mishaps.

Necromancer Games

Fans of RPG industry pioneer Rob Kuntz will want to check out *Tower Chaos*, the third in Rob's *Maze of Zayene* series. The adventures first appeared more than a decade ago with (ahem) "universal" rules that made them easy to play with First Edition Dungeons & Dragons. Never easy to find, the adventures have returned in full Third Edition glory. The latest installment weighs in at 48 pages and retails for $11.95.

Paradigm Concepts

Tired of flipping through the *Player's Handbook* every week just to remind yourself of some simple spell fact you just can't seem to memorize? Paradigm Concepts, the company that brought you the *Codex Arcanis* and the RPGA's Living Arcanis campaign, have just released *Spell Decks*, four sets of spell reference cards. Each set includes more than 300 individual spells, and retails for $24.99. Sets include *Mysteries of the Arcane* (wizards and sorcerers), *Blessings of the Divine* (clerics and paladins), *Songs of the Wild* (bards, druids and rangers), and *Mastery of the Mind* (psionic PC classes).

LEVEL
Magic Missile
1
Evocation [Force]
Level: Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Targets: Up to five creatures, no two of which can be more than 15 ft. apart
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes
A missile of magical energy darts forth from the character's fingertip and unerringly strikes its target. The missile deals 1d4+1 points of damage.
The missile strikes unerringly, even if the target is in melee or has anything less than total cover or concealment. Specific parts of a creature cannot be singled out. Inanimate objects (locks, etc.) cannot be damaged by the spell.
For every two levels of experience past 1st, the character gains an additional missile. The character has two at 3rd level, three at 5th level, four at 7th level, and the maximum of five missiles at 9th level or higher. If the character shoots multiple missiles, the character can have them strike a single creature or several creatures. A single missile can strike only one creature. The character must
Core Rule Book 1
p. 224

Magic Missle, *as shown on a* Spell Deck *card from* Mysteries of the Arcane *(slightly reduced).*

Bolt and Quiver by Stan!

BOLT, THE SECURITY GUARD REALLY IS A ZOMBIE.... A TOOTHLESS, DROOLING ZOMBIE, BUT A ZOMBIE NONETHELESS.
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
Stan!
CALM YOURSELF, MY UNDEAD-SALIVA-COVERED FRIEND. EVERY ADVENTURER KNOWS THAT ZOMBIES ARE SLOW AND THEREFORE EASY TO ESCAPE.
BONK
AAH!
RULE #12: ALWAYS CALL FOR BACK-UP.
I HAVE GOT TO MEET THE GUY WHO PROGRAMMED YOU!
THAT CAN BE ARRANGED
©2002 STAN! WWW.BOLTANDQUIVER.COM

Company Profile: Paradigm Concepts

Paradigm Concepts was one of the first d20 companies to get in on the action, back when d20 publishing was anything but a "sure thing." To date all of their products have centered on the world of Arcanis, a fantasy setting rife with moral choices, political drama, and complex plots. Last year, Paradigm brought their world to the RPGA Network *with* Living Arcanis (LA)*, the first organized play campaign set in a world created by a d20 System publisher. We recently had a chance to put some questions to Paradigm's president, Henry Lopez.*

POLY: ***What makes a Paradigm Concepts product different from the products of your competitors?***
LOPEZ: Word count, for one. We pack a lot of text density on each and every page. If you pick up one of our books, you'll note very little "white space" or fluff. But I think our true differentiation is in our concepts. As we grew older, we noticed that the types of stories we enjoyed evolved. We all began with good ol' "Hack-n-Slash" scenarios, but somewhere along the line, we became more interested in the story, political intrigue, and moral ambiguity. Our products target the more mature players, giving them a greater challenge than just kicking down the door, killing the monster, and grabbing the treasure, although there's still more action and mayhem than you can swing an axe at!

POLY: ***What do* Living Arcanis *and the* RPGA Network *mean to Paradigm Concepts?***
LOPEZ: Living Arcanis is very important to us. Besides being a great marketing vehicle for the *Arcanis* line, it allows us to showcase places and concepts that we'd otherwise not be able to include in a published product until much later. It also gives our fans insight into the dynamics of the campaign and allows them to affect the storyline through their actions.

The Living Arcanis campaign has been a huge boon to us, giving our products greater exposure than they would otherwise have had. From what's been reported to us, our first two adventures are already in the top five most-requested adventures for member-run campaigns in the history of the RPGA and to date, we've written more than 100,000 words for Living Arcanis. Not bad for a campaign less than a year old.

Our very first slogan for the LA campaign was "Leave your mark upon the Shattered Empires!" We were very serious about that.

Many of our LA adventures have what's called a Critical Events sheet that the GM fills out and mails in to us. Since our adventures have at least two possible conclusions and a bunch of other side issues that will be important in future adventures, the players' actions do indeed count. We leave the window open for 6 months, then tally the results and declare Conclusion X "canon" and continue from there.

Our recently published adventure, *Carnival of Swords,* is playable with Living Arcanis characters.

The biggest evidence of our commitment to allowing player's actions to shape the world is in the upcoming Gen Con premiere: *Assault Upon the Gate of Tears*. This two-round adventure is the conclusion of our first storyline, *Ascension*, that began at Gen Con 2001. Although all players will be able to play both rounds, only those who officially advance to the second round will be eligible to be chosen for the special mini-adventure that will only be run once there at Gen Con.

These six adventurers will determine if a great evil is overshadowed by an even greater menace or whether it's better to keep the devil you know instead of the one you don't. Whatever the outcome, win or lose, these six characters' names will be forever associated with that event and will become part of Arcanis history.

We've also just implemented our *Peers of the Realm* program, in which groups of six or more RPGA players can get together and create a small village or town for insertion into Arcanis. They will be able to detail the history, placement, resident major NPCs of the location and can write adventures for the LA campaign based upon their small slice of Arcanis. If approved, these adventures will be released to the general LA members to play and enjoy.

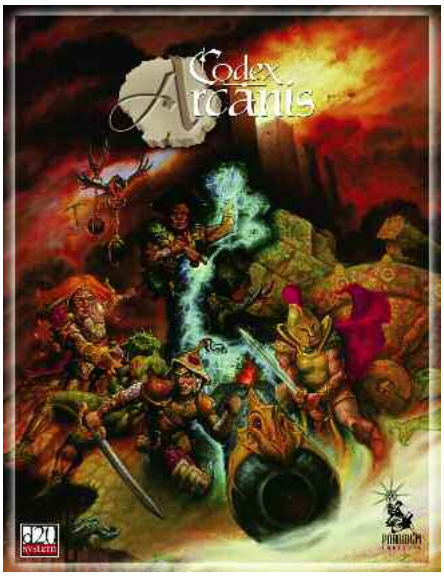
POLY: ***Paradigm's announcement that Green Ronin's Freeport was compatible with their game world was among the first instances of cooperation between d20 companies. What motivated that decision, and do you think the future holds more of this type of cooperation for Paradigm?***
LOPEZ: The OGL was created with the spirit of cooperation and exchange at its core. We chose to embrace that spirit and approached [Green Ronin publisher] Chris Pramas about including Freeport back at the 2001 GAMA Trade Show. He graciously agreed.

Green Ronin's Freeport background was a perfect fit for our setting of Arcanis, as Chris and I apparently read the same kind of fantasy as kids. Since that time, Green Ronin and Paradigm have always enjoyed a friendly and open relationship that continues to grow stronger each year.

As far as the future of this type of cooperation, I hope that it continues and I see signs that it will. Other companies are teaming up to help produce and market products, such as Mystic Eye and Ambient Games. I strongly feel that you'll be seeing more of it in the coming months.

POLY: Spell Decks ***(see* Release Roundup, *page 7) are one of the first "accessories" produced for the d20 System. What made you decide to get into cards, and what features of the spell decks will make them attractive to players?***
LOPEZ: Because of Living Arcanis, Team Paradigm has been running a lot of games and we've noticed how players of spellcaster characters are continuously flipping back and forth through the *Player's Handbook*. Remembering the old TSR spell cards and how useful they were in the past, we looked into porting that kind of accessory into Third Edition.

Given the fact that most gamers have played at least one CCG by now, we felt



Paradigm's world, Arcanis, is detailed in this XXX-page softcover volume.

that creating spell reference cards that can fit easily in your hands would be something eagerly embraced by D&D players at large.

Each of the four *Spell Decks* will have a complete set of every spell from the *Player's Handbook* and other select d20 publishers for that particular spellcaster. So, for example, if you only play wizards or sorcerers, you need only purchase *Mysteries of the Arcane* to have every spell you'll need for your game.

We also plan to offer a special service. Starting in August, players will be able to send us their own home-grown spells and we will happily format them in the same style as the *Spell Decks* and release them as a pdf for free on our website. Just print and cut them out and they'll be ready for insertion into your *Spell Deck* set.

POLY: ***Your* Races of Legend *series seems to be covering ground that's also been staked out by Mongoose Publishing's* Quintessential *series and Green Ronin's* Races of Renown *series, if not others. Are you nervous about entering such a crowded market? How will the* Races of Legend *series differ from these other offerings?***

LOPEZ: Well, the announcement of the *Races of Legend* series was a great comedy of errors as we announced the series at practically the same time as Green Ronin. As far as Mongoose's *Quintessential* series, it was my impression that the series was on PC Classes. It was some time after our announcement was made that they added races to that line.

Luckily, there are some companies that feel that working with a competitor makes more sense than taking a more adversarial attitude, which is why Green Ronin's General Manager Nicole Lindroos and I immediately called each other and came up with an equitable solution. We decided to each postpone a book (we are postponing our dwarf book and they their elf book) until a later date so as not to ruin each other's potential sales.

What's more, we have decided to publish books that compliment each other in what we are calling the *OGL Interlock* series. Both their *Races of Renown* and our *Races of Legends* will belong to this series. As an example, we will be releasing a giants book to compliment their dwarf book. Each will sport a cover that when put side by side will create an exciting battle scene between frost giants and dwarves.

As for being nervous about entering such a crowded market, I'd say no. We can't run a business by stopping production on a product just because a competitor announces a similar one at a later date. We have complete faith in the quality of our products and have a different conceptual vision for the series than some of the others out there. Our books will be structured as a tool kit for players and game masters to craft unique and interesting versions of the more common staples of fantasy literature.

POLY: ***What does the future hold for Paradigm Concepts?***

LOPEZ: This coming year will be quite a hectic one with a product a month starting in May and not stopping until November. Look forward to more sourcebooks detailing Arcanis, more generic sourcebooks that are non-campaign specific, and if all goes well, our first non-d20 original RPG for Gen Con 2003.

Meanwhile, the Living Arcanis campaign will probably grow to 24 modules a year after Gen Con with our second storyline starting in September.

Learn more about Paradigm Concepts by visiting their web page at www.paradigmconcepts.com.

Bolt and Quiver by Stan!

ALRIGHT! YOU'VE CAPTURED US.... NOW WHAT?
RULE #15: BRING ALL PRISONERS TO THE WAITING ROOM
"THE WAITING ROOM"? WHAT'S THAT? SOME CODE WORD FOR THE DUNGEON? THE TORTURE CHAMBER? THE MORGUE?
SHUFFLE
SKUFF
SHUFFLE
SKUFF DRAG
TOMB OF DOOM, INC... HELLO, MR. DEMOGORGON ...I'M SORRY, MR. JAQUON IS UNAVAILABLE....
THE WAITING ROOM.
OOOF!
THUD
Stan!
IT'S NO USE USING THOSE TONES OF VOICE WITH ME...
I'M SORRY, SIR, I'LL START YOUR TORTURE IN A MOMENT.
THAT'S WHY I HATE AMUSEMENT PARKS... THERE'S ALWAYS A LINE!
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RPGA NETWORK

News from the Top

Data, Departures, and Déja Vu

Just a few short months back, when I took over this job, I decided that I would always use this forum to keep people informed of what is happening and developing within the RPGA globally. Because so much is going on, we'll be posting additional development information on our soon-to-be-overhauled web site (www.rpga.com), which should leave this space for facts and general outlines of where the organization is headed.

The big issue this time around is how the RPGA Network itself is restructuring to bring better service and closer ties to all members around the world. We've recently been beset with some very unique challenges that have exasperated some of our members, particularly those in Europe.

Different nations around the world have different laws regarding the storage of personal information (such as the information you provide to the RPGA Network upon signing up). Accordingly, we've had to keep separate records in different countries. In some cases, RPGA players and GMs have traveled to events around the world and established multiple sets of play histories and records.

If the organization is to thrive globally, we can't allow this to continue. In order to take advantage of some of the new RPGA initiatives currently being discussed (such as the GM program profiled last issue), we need to consolidate all of our records in a single database to ensure that all members are truly participating in the same organization. A unified global database means that event reporting will be simple and faster, meaning that you'll be able to see your RPGA points accumulate in a much more timely fashion.

Why now?

Wizards of the Coast was already engaged in a massive database consolidation process, and since a unified database would help us in so many ways we decided to piggyback on that effort. This has meant we've had to work very hard to ensure that our database complies with both European and US data protection laws. Doing so has meant we've had to change the way we use this information, and how we allow access to it.

In the short term, however, it's also meant an interruption in *Polyhedron* subscriptions for some European members. In the past, *Polyhedron* was designed and printed in the US, then shipped overseas to the UK office, from which it was distributed to all European members. A change in Hasbro corporate policy unintentionally forbade us from shipping the printed magazines overseas, and since the US office didn't have legal access to the personal information of any European members who joined an RPGA branch office, we were not legally allowed to send the magazines direct from the US.

It's taken an extraordinary amount of time to straighten out the details, but the upshot is that the situation is now resolved, and that we are reprinting the last two issues of *Dungeon/Polyhedron* to distribute to those who missed them thanks to a mixture of bad luck and tricky data protection laws.

All those members should now have received all missing issues. If you haven't, please email me at ianr@wizards.com, and we'll send you replacements immediately.

It perhaps goes without saying that I'd like to extend a huge personal thanks to those members who have stuck with us through these difficult times with patience and understanding.

By this time, some of you are no doubt aware of the imminent departure of Sean Connor from the RPGA staff. Sean is and always will be a close personal dear friend. He aided and abetted me in the UK, ably filling in when I was absent and helping to run the RPGA here in Europe. He will be sadly missed by both members and myself alike, but he wishes to pursue new pastures and we all wish him well.

Sean, however, tells me that he plans to stay involved in the RPGA in the UK, even if he's no longer being paid to do so. Another die-hard until the end. Way to go, Sean.

From sad news to good. A lot of you will remember Tom Ko from his days as RPGA Clerk and North American Branch Manager. I have the pleasure to say that, after a space of just more than a year, we've managed to get Tom back in the RPGA fold. We immediately set him up to work on helping us liaise with the different departments within Wizards of the Coast to ensure that things go faster and more smoothly. Welcome back, Tom. You've been sorely missed.

Tom Ko returns to the RPGA!

Last time around, I spoke extensively about the all-new GM program. This is gathering pace and I thank all those that replied to be included in the development side. I'm pretty excited about the way it's shaping up and hope to have full details available soon. Keep an eye on our web site for more information as we have it developed.

Well, that's it for another issue. If at any time you wish to know more, have the need to flag an issue, or wish to tell us we are doing a great job, please feel free to drop me a line at the email address below. As usual, if you have membership information-related concerns (such as a change of address), contact Tim Kelly at rpgahq@wizards.com

Ian Richards
Worldwide RPGA Director
ianr@wizards.com

IMPROVED INITIATIVE:

d20 Innovation

Legendary Classes

by Wil Upchurch

illustrations by Vinod Rams

This article marks the first in a new series here in the pages of Polyhedron. *We're calling the column "Improved Initiative," and hope that it will give us a chance to highlight some of the rules and conceptual innovations from the greater world of the d20 Industry. Legendary classes, developed by Fantasy Flight Games, first appear in* Path of the Sword, *a sourcebook for martial classes that should be on store shelves by the end of June. Additional legendary classes will appear in* Path of Magic, Path of Faith, *and* Path of Shadow, *coming in late 2002.*

So you stole the Kingston diamond, passed the guild's tests, and became a master thief. Or perhaps you've mastered the whirling blades and won a handsome fee in the arena. Maybe you're a wizard who mastered the elements and learned to carry the stuff of fire within your very body. What is left for men and women such as you, who have conquered every challenge, solved every puzzle, and defeated every enemy?

There is one challenge left: to become a legend.

Legendary classes present high-level options for characters on the verge of greatness, whose names will be scribed eternally and against whose deeds each man shall measure his own. Although similar in concept and appearance to prestige classes, they represent far more. They describe the pinnacle of a profession or culture, the kind of opportunity that only appears once in a generation. Someone who decides to walk the path of a legendary class may be fulfilling his people's oldest myth, or a society's greatest fear. It is never an easy path, nor one many would choose. Those who do take up the mantle award themselves great power as well as great danger, and only the boldest are able to fulfill their destiny.

CLASS MECHANICS

Legendary classes have all the same progressions as normal classes: base attack bonus, saving throws, and special abilities. They also have unique class skill packages and proficiencies. Like a prestige class, there are prerequisites that must be fulfilled before the first legendary class level may be selected. Some of these are left open for the DM's discretion, so that he can customize them to his home campaign. This allows the DM to include feats from official sources that have not been released as Open Game Content, such as specialized feats from *Sword & Fist* or the Forgotten Realms *Campaign Setting*.

THE PREPARATION

A character must announce his intention to take a legendary class well in advance of ever taking a level in it. In game terms, this represents the character trying to catch the attention of a deity or powerful extra-planar being, applying for a position within an organization, or channeling the spirits of his ancestors. Two levels before the character takes his first legendary class level, he must announce his commitment. This means that if Kelethor decides to channel the ghost bear spirit in order to become his clan's ghost bear at 12th level, he must announce his intention no later than the point at which he reaches 10th level. Once the character has announced the level at which he will become a legend, there is no turning back.

Each legendary class has among its prerequisites a list of quests, each of which must be fulfilled between the time of commitment and the acquisition of the first level of the class. If the character has achieved such a quest before declaring for a legendary class he may not count that quest toward his prerequisites. Only quests achieved after he has announced his intentions help his progress toward a legendary class. Once each quest has been fulfilled and all other prerequisites are met, the character may take a legendary class level.

Legends wait for no man. If some or all of the quests go unfulfilled, the character may not advance in level until they are. All excess experience gained in the meantime is lost. This means that in the above example, if Kelethor reached 65,999 experience

Non-rule article contents © 2002. Fantasy Flight, Inc.

points without visiting the burial ground of each past ghost bear, he would gain no more experience until he had done so. The character need not meet all the prerequisites of the class upon announcing his intentions, and may continue to advance a single level in a non-legendary class, but he must meet the prerequisites before taking the first legendary class level. If he does not, the same penalty described above applies.

THE POWER

Legendary characters have access to powers and abilities beyond the reach of those who have chosen ordinary lives and less impressive legacies. They also wield greater control over the development of their powers than other characters, having choices to make as they rise in level and power. Even though two characters march down the same path, each may end up quite differently depending on these choices.

For each legendary class level gained, the character may choose one special ability from those listed. The power and scope of this ability are determined at that time and do not increase as the character goes up in levels. The power level of each legendary power is determined by the class level at which it was selected. A ghost bear who chooses the Enhanced Strength power at 3rd level notes his power level as "Enhanced Strength III" on his character sheet.

No power may be chosen more than once. This always means a sacrifice for the character, but sometimes the rewards of patience are worth the wait.

THE PRICE

Once a character has begun to walk the path of a legend, he may not turn back even if his faith is shattered or his kingdom lost. The forces acting upon him are great, and he cannot resist the tidal wave of fate he has chosen to ride. Once a character chooses to take a legendary class level, he may not choose any other classes until the legendary class has been completed. Although this may seem restrictive, it is a small price to pay for the power and prestige afforded a legend.

Table 1-1: The Ghost Bear

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Legendary Power I
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Legendary Power II
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Legendary Power III
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Legendary Power IV
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Legendary Power V

GHOST BEAR

The ghost bear is the tribal champion of a scattered group of nomads that roam the plains and forests. Only once every other generation does the ghost bear spirit compel one among the tribe to take on its mantle and forge a better life for the people it protects. The spirit seeks only one who is brave, strong, and respectful of the traditions of the clan to follow in the footsteps of those who have passed before.

Once the ghost bear is chosen he ends his roaming and claims a territory as his own. He then hunts all the enemies of the clans within that area, clearing out entire forests of dangers to his people. No menace goes unnoticed, and the ghost bear does not stop in his quest to make a safe haven for his people until the ghost bear spirit calls his soul to defend another realm.

Hit Die: d12.

Requirements
To qualify to become a ghost bear, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Animal Empathy: 5 ranks
Knowledge (local): 5 ranks
Knowledge (nature): 5 ranks
Wilderness Lore: 15 ranks
Feats: Endurance, Iron Will, Track, any one feat of the DM's choice.
Special: The character must have the rage ability. He must also be from a well-established barbarian tribe. The tribe must have a strong ancestral tradition, and be from an area populated by any type of bear.

Quests
The character must drink in the essence of the bear spirit, both literally and figuratively. In order to gain the favor of the spirit, the character must single-handedly hunt down a bear (brown or polar, depending on the region) and defeat it in combat. This often includes long periods of tracking through difficult terrain. In addition, the character may wear no armor and carry no tools other than a simple knife or dagger. If the chase lasts for days, the character must hunt for food and shelter during the trial. Once the character has found and slain the bear, he cuts out its heart and drinks the blood from it. In this he communes with the ghost bear and ties a bit of his essence to that of the spirit that calls him.

The character must seek out and visit the burial ground of each of the four ghost bears that have come before. At these sacred locations, he must perform a ritual in honor of the dead. First he must cook and eat a stew of bear meat and his own blood. Next he plants several wooden stakes in the ground around the grave of the ancestor, forming a circle in which he must lay. It is at this time that the ancestor's spirit judges the character. Most spirits merely wish to be left in peace and give the tribesman their blessing. Others, however, jealously guard the legacy of the ghost bear, and may test the spiritual or physical prowess of the seeker.

Class Skills
The ghost bear's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Ride (Str), Spot (Wis), Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features
All the following are class features of the ghost bear legendary class.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: A ghost bear is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light armor, medium armor and shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

Ghost Bear Abilities
Enhanced Strength: The character gains the strength of a bear, adding a +1 legendary bonus to his Strength per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Enhanced Constitution: The character gains the toughness of a bear, adding a +1 legendary bonus to his Constitution per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Bloodstench (Ex): The character gains the Scent special ability and receives a +2 bonus per power level on all Track checks. He may pinpoint the location of any creature whose blood he has drawn in the last 24 hours, as long as the creature is within one mile per power level. The character may track a creature's bloodstench for up to one day per power level without needing sleep, food, or water. At the end of this time, he must rest for 8 full hours per day of tracking.

Embodiment of the Bear (Sp): The character gains the druid's ability to *wild shape* once per day per power level. The ghost bear may only take the form of a dire bear. In addition, when in bear form the character gains damage reduction 5/-.

The Hunt (Ex): The ghost bear hunts his enemies relentlessly through the forest, over the mountains, and in the rivers and lakes. To accomplish his tireless task, the ghost bear gains extraordinary movement abilities. For every power level, the ghost bear gains +5 ft. to his base speed, +10 ft. swim, and +10 ft. climb. Swim and climb are now considered normal movement rates for the ghost bear.

Blood Frenzy (Ex): If the ghost bear takes more than 30 points of damage from one creature in a single round, he flies into a blood frenzy on his next action. The ghost bear receives a +1 bonus per power level to attack and damage rolls against that creature, and will attack no other until either the creature or the ghost bear is dead or removed from combat. The blood frenzy lasts a number of rounds equal to 3 + the ghost bear's Constitution modifier. This ability stacks with a barbarian's rage ability.

WITCH QUEEN

These legendary sorceresses gather large armies to both defend their homes and enforce their will. While not necessarily evil, the witch queen always has her own interests to pursue and is rarely checked by the will of an outside authority, such as the lord of the land or a rival wizard. After all, who could challenge the might of an archmage who has the power of an army behind her?

Witch queens often choose remote locations in which to build their strongholds– the depths of a mighty swamp or the tallest peak of a mountain range. Wherever she builds her stronghold, the witch queen often leaves it under the supervision of her most trusted ally. This leaves her free to pursue her interests, which often take her long distances or even to other planes of existence. She still expects her minions to

Table 1-2: The Witch Queen

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Legendary Power I
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Legendary Power II
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Legendary Power III
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Legendary Power IV
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Legendary Power V

follow her commands, and those that do not do so swiftly often find themselves relieved of their command, or worse.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a witch queen, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-good
Diplomacy: 5 ranks
Intimidate: 5 ranks
Knowledge (arcana): 15 ranks
Spellcraft: 10 ranks
Feats: Leadership, any one feat of the DM's choice.
Special: Only females may become witch queens. The character must speak at least 6 languages and must be able to cast 5th level arcane spells. She also must have a Leadership score of at least 15 (see *DMG* p. 45).

Quests

The character must read from the three legendary tomes of arcane lore. These books contain the accumulated knowledge of an ancient civilization whose magical arts were far more developed than those of the present age. They were intentionally scattered to remote libraries, monasteries, and city vaults in order to guard the precious secrets of spellcraft from those who would abuse them. Just gaining knowledge of the whereabouts of the three books could be a quest in itself, and some of the books' guardians are less than eager to share the knowledge of the ages.

The character must seek out the cohort or close ally of a sorcerer or wizard of equal or greater power to herself. She must then convince the cohort to join her, without using magical compulsions of any kind. If the character has to kill or harm the cohort's master during this time, the quest goes unfulfilled. Invariably this quest is the genesis for a lifelong enmity between masters, new and old.

Class Skills

The witch queen's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken separately) (Int), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the witch queen legendary class.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: A witch queen is proficient with all simple weapons and no armor or shields.

Witch Queen Abilities

Arcane Channel (Su): The witch queen may channel spells through any cohorts within one mile per power level. The witch queen casts the spell as normal, but the effect is generated from the cohort. This does not affect the cohort in any way. The maximum spell level that may be channeled in such a fashion is equal to the witch queen's power level at the time she selects this ability. *Example:* Mirya, a 13th-level sorcerer and 3rd-level witch queen with Arcane Channel III, may cast up to 3rd level spells through her cohort.

Charismatic Leader: The witch queen gains +2 per power level to her Leadership score.

Improved Scrying (Su): The witch queen may *scry* through her followers and cohorts, seeing and hearing as if she were present at their location. This ability has a range of ten miles per power level, and she may only *scry* through one follower at a time.

Inspire Bravery (Su): Once per day per power level, the witch queen can grant a +1 morale bonus per power level to any cohorts or followers within 30 ft. This bonus may apply to any two of the following: attack rolls, damage rolls, Armor Class, or saving throws. The bonus must be the same for all followers and must be chosen when the ability is activated. Each use lasts for one minute.

Loyal Followers: The character may recruit one extra cohort for each power level. The normal rules for a cohort apply to each cohort separately.

Spell Power (Su): Once per day per power level, the witch queen may cast a spell as if her caster level were one higher per power level. So, if Mirya (13th-level sorcerer) takes this ability at 4th level, she may cast four spells per day as if her caster level were 17.

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A Polyhedron Mini-Game of High Octane Adventure

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Thunderball Rally

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For use as a complete campaign setting for the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game

This *Polyhedron* d20 System Mini-Game requires the Dungeons & Dragons *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual* to play. *Polyhedron* Mini-Games adapt the standard D&D rules and conventions to nonstandard settings and genres. Unless specifically noted in the text, this Mini-Game follows the core D&D rules. If you know how to play Dungeons & Dragons, you'll pick up the rules of this game in moments.

Thunderball Rally utilizes game mechanics developed for the new Dungeons & Dragons game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison and the d20 Modern *Roleplaying Game* by Bill Slavicsek, Rich Redman, and Jeff Grubb. This Wizards of the Coast game contains no Open Game Content.

Based on the original Dungeons & Dragons game by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

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You have a reputation. You love speed. You have so many traffic violations you have to change your name every time you renew your license. You hear screaming tires in your sleep and you'd rather smell burning rubber in the morning than coffee or bacon. So the invitation to the famous, annual, highly illegal race across the United States puts an all-day smile on your face.

What Is Thunderball Rally?

Thunderball Rally is a d20 System game about racing across the United States of America in 1976. It's also a preview for the upcoming d20 Modern *Roleplaying Game*. The d20 Modern RPG contains all the rules for playing any flavor of modern-day fantasy. If you know how to play D&D or any other d20 System game, you already know how to play d20 Modern.

Although the game creates an imaginary cross-country car race, you can use these d20 System modern vehicle rules with *Shadow Chasers* (*Polyhedron* #150) or some game of your own creation.

In *Thunderball Rally*, you play one of the crews in the largest, most lucrative, most illegal cross-country road race in America. If you've seen *Cannonball Run*, *The Blues Brothers*, *Death Race 2000*, and *Smokey and the Bandit*, or if you always wanted to drive the *General Lee* and make a fool out of Boss Hogg and the sheriff, this game is for you.

You can play *Thunderball Rally* with all players in the same crew, or competing with each other. The race rules don't cover support staff, so you can have helicopters checking for speed traps, lawyers standing by to spring you from jail, or another car sporting machine-guns and riding shotgun.

Thunderball Rally Rules

If you are already familiar with d20 Modern, skim the rules on character creation for any changes, then read the vehicle rules. You already know how skills and feats work.

You will need either a copy of the d20 Modern rules, or both the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to play this game.

Action

Thunderball Rally isn't about planning out your exact route for the race. It's not about figuring out every rest stop, bathroom break, and refuel point. It's about racing bumper-to-bumper, wheel-to-wheel, with the other crews. It's about outfoxing hick county sheriffs. It's about interacting with race fans and colorful characters on the roads of the United States, not to mention with other crews. After all, if there's no rule against sabotage or attacking other crews, it's not cheating...

GMs plan out Pit Stops, action scenes between players, or between players and NPCs. They don't all have to involve vehicles, or even other racers. Characters may encounter a hitchhiking runaway bride, find themselves pursued by a vengeful sheriff or F.B.I. agent, or decide to break one of their fellow racers out of jail. The key word, however, is action. There's no point in roleplaying driving down an empty, straight, level highway on a nice day. Throw in some shotgun-toting drunken rednecks blasting Kansas from the 8-tracks in their pickup trucks, an overturned oil tanker truck, road construction, and some ruthless competitors, and you have a *Thunderball Rally* Pit Stop. Actions and accomplishments during Pit Stops affect winning the race.

Three Key Conceits

The law enforcement community knows the race exists and tries to stop it, but rarely knows exactly when and where the race will start. Organized crime sponsors the race, and chooses the best amateur drivers in the world to compete. From the first race in 1950 to the present, the Sicilian Cosa Nostra has run the race. Of course, they are completely honorable and would never stoop to fixing a competition...

Blood on the Asphalt

The following things disqualify racers from winning the prize:

Not following the rules of the race (see "The Rules of the Race" sidebar).

Talking to the media about the race.

Attracting attention to the race. This catchall category essentially lets the sponsors disqualify anyone who makes them mad.

Squealing to the cops about the race or its sponsors. This not only disqualifies you, but also puts a price on your head. When the sponsors talk about mechanics, they mean hit men...

The Rules of the Race

No public discussion of the race.
Starting order determined by random the night before the race.
No aircraft or watercraft allowed.
All vehicles start from the same warehouse in Manhattan.
All vehicles must travel from the Manhattan warehouse to the docking berth of the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach, California.
Winner determined by shortest elapsed time.
Routes determined by individual vehicle crews.
Crews must travel in their own vehicle or be disqualified.
Vehicles must travel the route under their own power, or be disqualified.
There is only one prize. Come in first, or go home empty.
The prize is $500,000.00; and possession of the race trophy until the next race.

Although there are no rules against sabotaging each other's vehicles, victims take a dim view of such activities and tend to express themselves with tire irons and other weapons.

CHAPTER ONE

Race Crew Generation

Anyone can be a racer. The only thing they all have in common is that they did something involving vehicles spectacular enough to garner the attention of the Thunderball Rally's sponsors. Maybe they bootlegged a truckload of beer across state lines in remarkably short time. Maybe they stole forty cars in twenty-four hours. Maybe they evaded pursuit by the Illinois Highway Patrol, and wrecked a record number of police vehicles in the process. Maybe they invented a revolutionary fuel injection system. They are car thieves, getaway drivers, truckers, delivery drivers, garage mechanics, assembly line workers at automotive plants, professional race car crews, bodyguards, mercenaries, smugglers, bootleggers, revolutionaries, and ordinary folks who like to drag race on weekends.

And at the end of the Thunderball Rally, one of them is going home a half-million dollars richer.

Abilities

Use the rules presented in Chapter 1 of the *Player's Handbook* to generate ability scores for your *Thunderball Rally* racer.

Races

All members of a *Thunderball Rally* racing crew are human. They can be of any ethnic persuasion, either male or female. There are no favored classes in *Thunderball Rally*.

Characters and Language

Thunderball Rally racing crews begin play speaking the primary language used in their country and American English. All other world languages are available for characters to learn.

The 1st-Level Racer

The 1st-level racer comes together as you combine ability scores with a class. Here's a summary of some of the game's new details.

Starting Wealth

All *Thunderball Rally* racers start the game with $20,000. They use this money to purchase a vehicle and any accessories or personal equipment they wish to own (see Chapter 5: Start Your Engines). Racers on the same team should pool their funds. Note that to be on the same team, racers must all have a way to reach the finish line. If you want 6 racers on your team, you need to have multiple vehicles, or six seats in one vehicle.

Additional Wealth

If racers start the game above 1st-level, they have an additional 1d6 x $1,000 per level at their disposal.

Winning a race nets an additional $500,000 characters can use to repair or improve their existing vehicle, or to purchase a new one for the next race.

Racers can sell equipment for half its listed value if undamaged, one-fourth its listed value if damaged.

Defense

Unlike in the Dungeons & Dragons game, there's no Armor Class in *Thunderball Rally*. Instead, characters have a Defense rating. Defense is determined by adding the following numbers: 10 + class bonus + Dex bonus + size bonus + any miscellaneous bonus. The total, called the character's Defense, represents the number an opponent must achieve when attacking the character.

Most *Thunderball Rally* racers do not wear any kind of body armor. Should you wish to import armor from other d20 System games, add the armor bonus to a character's Defense (this stacks with that character's class Defense bonus).

Bulky, archaic armor is hard to come by in 1976, and should usually prove prohibitively expensive. Many glamour-obsessed stars of the Thunderball Rally value style more than caution, so armor-wearing racers are likely to face ridicule from their more carefree competitors.

Action Points

Action Points represent a character's innate ability to influence the world around her. When a character faces extreme danger or just has to pull a miracle out of thin air, she spends an Action Point.

Navigators start with 1d4+1 Action Points, bodyguards start with 1d4+2 Action Points, and aces start with 1d4+3 Action Points. Gamemaster characters have a number of Action Points equal to half their Hit Dice, rounded up, unless specified otherwise.

A character spends an Action Point to influence a task resolution roll (either an attack roll, a skill check, an ability check, or a saving throw). The character can spend the Action Point before or after rolling the d20, but before the GM announces the result of the action.

Normally, a racer can use Action Points only on her own roll. However, any time a racer makes an aid another action, she can spend an Action Point on the check or roll she is assisting.

For instance, if an ace needs to make a Drive check to establish pursuit of another vehicle, the navigator can assist and spend one of her own Action Points on the Drive check.

An Action Point allows the racer to add +1d6 to all her d20 rolls for the rest of the round, thus allowing for a greater chance of success. A racer on any given action can spend only one Action Point, but several racers can each spend one Action Point if they are assisting each other. The players roll their d6s once and use the combined result for the rest of the round.

Multiclass Characters

Each time your character earns a new level, you can choose to take another level in your previous class or choose a new class. Adding a new class broadens your repertoire of abilities at the expense of focused expertise in a single class.

Level-Dependent Benefits

Beyond the skills, attack bonuses, saving throw bonuses, and other class features outlined for each class, characters gain other benefits from advancing in levels.

Table 1-1: Experience and Level-Dependent Benefits

Character Level	XP Total	Class Skill Max Ranks	Cross-class Skill Max Ranks	Feats	Ability Increase
1st	0	4	2	Feat, Feat	—
2nd	1,000	5	2.5	—	—
3rd	3,000	6	3	Feat	—
4th	6,000	7	3.5	—	increase
5th	10,000	8	4	—	—
6th	15,000	9	4.5	Feat	—
7th	21,000	10	5	—	—
8th	29,000	11	5.5	—	increase
9th	36,000	12	6	Feat	—
10th	45,000	13	6.5	—	—

Table 1-1: Experience and Level-Dependent Benefits identifies how many experience points (XP) you need to acquire each level and what benefits racers get at each level, regardless of their racer class.

Multiclass racers use their total character level on this table. In other words, a 3rd-level ace/1st-level navigator is a 4th-level character. Multiclass racers with more than 10 levels should use Table 3-2: Experience and Level-Dependent Benefits in the *Player's Handbook*.

XP Total: The number of experience points required to attain this level.

Class skill max ranks: The maximum possible number of ranks in each skill for a racer of this level. A skill counts as a class skill if it's on the class list of any of the racer's classes.

Cross-class skill max ranks: As above, but the maximum for skills that don't appear on the racer's class list.

Feats: The level at which racers can choose another feat.

Ability Increases: The level at which racers can improve the ability score of their choice by 1 point.

Classes

Classes in *Thunderball Rally* focus on the kinds of people who participate in the most lucrative (and illegal) street race in the 200-year history of the United States. They have a slightly different structure than those in the *Player's Handbook* to better represent the wide range of skills and knowledge to which modern people have access. Each class level, therefore, represents an area of expertise in which that character trains, and multiclassing can be done freely and without restriction.

Players choose from three possible racer classes, presented in the following order:

The Ace: Levels in this class demonstrate mastery and control of automobiles. These characters possess keen reflexes and a sharp understanding of how to take their machine to the limits. They are the stars of the racing circuit.

The Navigator: Although most navigators are reasonable drivers, their skill truly shows in their ability to find shortcuts, pick the best route, and keep oriented in power slides and involuntary 360-degree spins. You can count on a good navigator to keep the car running, too.

The Bodyguard: Not everybody plays nice, so bodyguards provide protection for their racing crews. While bodyguards figure strongly in some teams' strategies, they're generally the unsung heroes of a racing crew.

The Ace

A character takes levels in this class if she wants to be the primary driver for her crew.

Aces come from all over the world, and from all walks of life. Some are wheelmen for the Mob, some are illegal street racers, and some are profes-

sional rally or stock car drivers. Of course, the pros risk being banned from legitimate tracks for life if they are caught in this illegal, unsanctioned race, but a clear shot at a cool half-million is difficult to pass up.

Aces tend to be flashy, charismatic people and the race circuit treats them like rock stars. They relish the attention, and love being the center of attention almost as much as they love winning races.

Hit Points

At first level, 8 + Con Modifier.
At each additional level, 1d8 + Con Modifier.

Action Points

Aces gain 1d4+3 action points per level.

Class Skills

Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Cha), Gather Information (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Pick Pockets (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (5 + Int Modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at each additional level: 5 + Int Modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the ace.

Starting Feats: The ace begins play with the Simple Weapon Proficiency feat and the Weapon Group Proficiency (basic firearms) feat.

Breaker, Breaker: The ace is adept at using citizen's band (CB) radios, and can use some of her other class abilities (attract, coordinate, presence, persuade) over a CB radio. The ace can use this ability a number of times per day (of game time) depending on her level (once at 1st level, twice at 5th level, and three times at 10th level).

Uncanny Dodge: At 2nd level, the ace retains her Dexterity bonus to Defense (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an unseen attacker. At 9th level, the ace can no longer be flanked.

The ace uses this ability in vehicle combat as well as personal combat.

Special Ability: At 3rd, 5th, and 7th levels the ace selects a special ability from the following list (no special ability can be selected more than once):

Attract: The ace has the ability to temporarily improve the attitude of a Gamemaster character because of her overall appearance and personality. Once per day of game time, the ace can use this ability to improve a Diplomacy skill check to improve that character's attitude. This provides a bonus equal to one-half of the racer's ace levels, rounded down. See NPC Attitudes in Chapter 5: Campaigns of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Bonus Class Skill: The ace may designate a cross-class skill as a class skill. Once designated, the skill is considered a class skill every time the character adds a new ace level. The skill must be one available in *Thunderball Rally*, and it should be relatively common, as well. The GM is free to rule that a specific skill is off limits as a bonus class skill.

Coordinate: The ace is the boss of the crew, and often has a knack for getting the crew to work together. When the ace can aid others and give directions, she provides a bonus to the task at hand by making an aid another check. This coordinate bonus is in addition to the normal aid another bonus (+2), and it is equal to one-half the racer's ace levels, rounded down. So the ace provides a total +3 bonus at 2nd level (+2 aid another bonus plus +1 coordinate bonus), and +7 at 10th level (+2 aid another bonus plus +5 coordinate bonus). Coordinate can't be used to assist in combat. Coordinate is a standard action.

Presence: Once per day of game time, the ace has the ability to temporarily awe a Gamemaster character using the strength of her presence and personality. The ace makes an awe check (d20 roll) and adds a bonus equal to one-half of the racer's ace levels, rounded down; plus her Charisma bonus. The target makes a Will saving throw to resist, and can add her own Reputation bonus to the save. If the driver's total is higher, the target can take no actions while in the racer's presence for a number of rounds equal to the presence bonus. The target can defend normally and is not helpless, but is struck with awe by the ace.

Table 1-2: The Ace

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Breaker, Breaker, bonus feat	+1	+2
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Uncanny Dodge, bonus feat	+2	+2
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Special ability	+2	+2
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+3
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Special ability	+3	+3
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+3
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Special ability	+3	+4
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+2	Bonus feat	+4	+4
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+3	Uncanny dodge	+4	+4
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+3	Bonus feat	+4	+5

Persuade: Once per day of game time, the ace has the ability to hamper a Gamemaster character's course of action through the use of argument, entreaty, or expostulation. Persuade can't be used in combat, but it can be used prior to the start of a combat situation depending on circumstances. The ace makes a persuade check (d20 roll) and adds a bonus equal to one-half of the racer's ace levels, rounded down; plus her Charisma bonus. Compare the total to the target's attitude on the Initial Attitude table (see NPC Attitudes in Chapter 5: Campaigns of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) to determine the target's new attitude based on the argument or entreaty the ace has presented. This new attitude lasts for a number of minutes equal to the persuade bonus; at the end of this period of time, the initial attitude returns.

Bonus Feat: Aces gain bonus feats at 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th,and 10th levels. These feats must be selected from the following list: Circuit Heel, Circuit Hero, Clipping, Daredevil, Dirt Track Demon, Drive-By, Frightful Presence, Grease the Axles, Influence, Persuasive, Vehicle Combat, Vehicle Gunnery, or Window Dive.

The Navigator

A character takes levels in this class if he wants to reach his destination by the most efficient route. The navigator is an essential part of most driving teams, handling both the maps and the tool kit.

Most navigators are mechanics and automotive engineers testing their ideas and theories in ways that mainstream design firms would not allow. They come from filling stations and Big Three automobile manufacturers. Some navigators are even members of professional rally race teams.

Navigators often have exuberant, flamboyant personalities as a way to steal attention from aces.

Hit Points

At first level, 8 + Con Modifier.
At each additional level, 1d8 + Con Modifier.

Action Points

Navigators gain 1d4+1 action points per level.

Class Skills

Craft (Int), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Pick Pockets (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st level: (7 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at each additional level: 7 + Int Modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the navigator.

Starting Feats: The navigator begins play with the Simple Weapon Proficiency feat and the Weapon Group Proficiency (basic firearms) feat.

Skill Emphasis: The navigator begins play with the Skill Emphasis feat. This feat may be applied to any class skill.

Special Ability: At 2nd, 5th, and 8th level, the navigator selects a special ability from the following list (no special ability can be selected more than once):

Focus: Once per day (in game time), the navigator can center his attention on a single task and gain a bonus equal to one-half his navigator levels, rounded down. The bonus can be applied to any skill check, but such intense focus requires that the racer spend twice as much time as normal to complete the task. So a skill check that requires an attack action or move action takes a full round, and a full-round action takes two rounds to complete.

Heart: The navigator possesses a great deal of self-confidence and courage. Because of this, once per day (in game time), the navigator can concentrate and gain a circumstance bonus based on his innate belief in himself and his abilities. The bonus is equal to one-half the racer's navigator levels, rounded down. The bonus can be applied to any ability check or attack roll. You can decide to use this class feature after making a die roll but before the GM reveals the result of the check or attack roll.

Table 1-3: The Navigator

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Skill Emphasis	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Special ability	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Secret	+2	+1
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Breaker 1-9	+2	+2
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Special ability	+3	+2
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Secret	+3	+2
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5		+3	+3
8th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	Special ability	+4	+3
9th	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	Secret	+4	+3
10th	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	Secret	+4	+4

Options: The navigator has a knack for quickly analyzing a situation and seeing the best course of action. By using a full-round action, the navigator finds a weakness in an opponent or determines a better way to solve a problem. This translates into a bonus equal to one-half the racer's navigator levels, rounded down. This bonus must be used in the racer's next turn, applying it either to an attack roll or skill check, as the situation warrants. The navigator can use this ability a number of times per day equal to his navigator levels divided by two, rounded down.

Plan: before a dramatic situation, whether combat or skill related, the navigator can spend time to develop a plan to best handle things. This requires an hour of preparation and an Intelligence check. The check is made with a bonus equal to one-half the racer's navigator levels, rounded down; plus his Intelligence bonus. The result of the check provides all of the navigator's allies with a circumstance bonus due to his planning and preparation. 15-19, +2 bonus; 20-24, +3 bonus; 25+, +4 bonus. This bonus can be applied to all skill checks and attack rolls made by the navigator and his allies, but the bonus only lasts for the first three rounds of the situation. After that, the bonus is reduced by 1 point for every additional round the situation continues, as the vagaries of circumstance begin to unravel even the best-laid plan. Plan can be attempted once every 24 hours of game time.

Trick: The navigator has the ability to temporarily confuse a Gamemaster character through the use of ploy and deception. To make a trick, the navigator must use an attack action. The target of the trick gets to make a Reflex save (DC 15) to think quickly on his feet and see through the trick. If the save fails, the target becomes befuddled and can only take a single action in his next turn (either an attack action or a move action, but not a full-round action). The navigator can use this ability a number of times per day equal to his navigator levels divided by two, rounded down.

Secret: Knocking around the tracks, streets, and garages, the navigator stumbles upon all sorts of applicable knowledge. At 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 10th level, the navigator chooses one secret from the following list. Note that the racer must choose a different secret each time.

Secret of brawling: The navigator gains a +1 bonus to melee attack rolls.
Secret of danger avoidance: The navigator gains a +1 bonus to Reflex saves.
Secret of ducking: The navigator gains a +1 dodge bonus to Defense.
Secret of inner strength: The navigator gains a +1 bonus to Will saves.
Secret of marksmanship: The navigator gains a +1 bonus to ranged attack rolls.
Secret of stamina: The navigator gains a +1 bonus to Fortitude saves.
Secret of survival: The navigator gains 3 hit points.

Breaker 1-9: "Breaker one-nine" allows a navigator to take an aid another action via a CB radio or other radio transceiver. As long as the navigator and the racer that the navigator aids are in radio communication, the navigator can use this ability. If the navigator has the Back Seat Driver feat, she can use it with this ability.

The Bodyguard

A character takes levels in this class if he wants to excel in combat.

Teams recruit bodyguards from ghetto revolutionaries, inner city kung fu academies, and the bare-knuckle boxing circuit. Some bodyguards are Viet Nam veterans, some are mercenaries, a few are terrorists trying to win some bread to pay for their revolutions, and others are organized crime soldiers.

Some bodyguards prefer to have everyone pay attention to the drivers and navigators. That lets them work in the shadows. Others resent the lack of attention. Just as drivers and navigators compete with each other to win races, bodyguards compete with each other to be the strongest, fastest, toughest, best shot, and so forth.

Hit Points

At first level, 10 + Con Modifier.
At each additional level, 1d10 + Con Modifier.

Table 1-4: The Bodyguard

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat	+2	+0
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	+1 hit point, Bonus feat	+3	+0
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Extreme effort 1	+3	+1
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus feat	+4	+1
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	+1 hit point	+5	+1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Extreme effort 2, Bonus feat	+5	+2
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	+1 hit point	+6	+2
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+7	+2
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Extreme effort 3	+7	+3
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+8	+3

Action Points

Bodyguards gain 1d4+2 action points per level.

Class Skills

Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Demolitions (Int), Drive (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st level: (5 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at each additional level: 5 + Int Modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the bodyguard.

Starting Feats: The bodyguard begins play with the Simple Weapon Proficiency feat and the Weapon Group Proficiency (basic firearms) feat.

Bonus Feat: The bodyguard gains bonus feats at 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: any Weapon Proficiency feat, Ambidexterity, Burst Fire, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack), Expertise (Improved Disarm, Improved Trip), Far Shot (Dead Aim), Heroic Surge, Martial Arts (Advanced Martial Arts, Defensive, Improved Martial Arts), Point-Blank Shot (Double-Tap, Precise Shot, Skip Shot, Shot on the Run), Power Attack (Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Sunder), Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Strafe, Two Weapon Fighting (Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting), Vehicle Combat, Vehicle Gunnery, or Weapon Focus.

+1 Hit Point: At 2nd, 5th, and 7th level, the bodyguard gains an additional Hit Point.

Extreme Effort: The bodyguard can push himself to make an extreme effort a number of times per game session based on the racer's bodyguard level. The effort must relate to either an attack roll, or a Climb, Jump, or Tumble skill check. The effort provides a circumstance bonus based on the racer's bodyguard level. Making an extreme effort also hinders the bodyguard with a penalty to Defense for one round, as determined by the racer's bodyguard level.

After making an extreme effort, the bodyguard becomes fatigued until the end of the current encounter.

Table 1-5: Extreme Effort

Bodyguard Level	Bonus	Defense Penalty	Uses
3-5	+3	-2	1/session
6-8	+4	-3	2/session
9-10	+5	-4	3/session

Chapter Two

Skills

Staying alive while keeping the rubber-side down requires numerous skills. *Thunderball Rally* uses a variety of skills from the *Player's Handbook* as well as the new skills listed in this chapter. See page 31 for a full listing of skills used in the *Thunderball Rally* game.

Drive (Dex): Use this skill to operate tracked and wheeled ground vehicles, such as automobiles, semi-tractor trailer rigs, and Army tanks.

Check: Typical driving tasks don't require checks, but *Thunderball Rally* is about all those other driving tasks: Combat, chases, performing unusual maneuvers, or driving in extreme circumstances.

For detailed rules on using the Drive skill, see Chapter 5: Start Your Engines!

Special: When operating a vehicle, 5 or more ranks in Drive provide a +2 synergy bonus to attack rolls with the vehicle or vehicle weapons.

Demolitions (Int; Trained Only): Use this skill to create and set explosive devices (including a timer or detonator) for maximum impact.

Check: Setting a simple explosive to blow up at a certain spot doesn't require a check, but any attempt to build an explosive device or set an explosive to cause a specific damage effect does.

Set Explosive Device: Placing an explosive in the optimum location for maximum blast efficiency takes skill and patience. Racers decide which type of explosive they wish to set, but the GM makes the check and compares it to the DC in Table 2-1, below (the GM makes the check so that you don't know exactly how well you've done). The DC indicates possible increases in base damage, as well as sets penalties to those caught in the blast radius. A failed check reduces the base damage by half, provides a +4 circumstance bonus to Reflex saves to avoid damage, and has a 15% chance of causing the device to explode prematurely.

Build Explosive Devices from Scratch: Creating a scratch-built explosive device requires the appropriate materials and time. In combat, the best that could be accomplished, regardless of the materials or skill check result, would be an improvised explosive device that's the equivalent of a Molotov cocktail (damage 1d6). In general, building explosive devices happens outside of combat or other dramatic situations.

When building explosive devices, the racer decides what kind of result he or she is after and tries to achieve the required DC. Adding a trap increases the complexity but doesn't affect the cost.

If the check fails, the device is ruined and the materials are wasted. There is also a 25% chance that the explosive detonates during construction on a failed check, dealing one-half of its intended damage.

Racers use the Disable Device skill to attempt to disarm a set explosive. The DC is 10 for a simple explosive device, 15 for a moderate explosive device, 20 for a complex explosive device (and so on). If the builder was successful in adding a trap, increase the DC by +10, +15, or +20. Note that failing to disarm a trapped explosive device sets off the explosive.

Special: You can take 10 when using the Demolitions skill, but you can't take 20.

Setting an explosive device for maximum blast efficiency takes one minute or more, depending on the scope of the job. You can set a simple explosive device as a full-round action.

Building an explosive from scratch, which includes fashioning the raw materials and combining chemicals and combustibles inside a housing of some kind, requires a check that takes the following amount of time: improvised, full-round action; simple, one hour; moderate, 12 hours; complex, one day; powerful, three days; devastating, one week.

Knowledge (Int, Trained Only): This skill encompasses a number of unrelated skills. Knowledge represents a study of a body of academic or scientific discipline. Each skill point assigned to a Skill

Drive and Aid Another

GMs should be very careful about when other racers can assist the driver. For instance, if a driver needs to make a Reflex save to avoid damage from a grenade, anyone who sees the grenade can instruct the driver which way to turn. Racers taking other actions or unable to see the grenade cannot assist.

Table 2-1: Set Explosive Device

Type	DC	Damage Increase	Penalty to Save
The Classic	10	None	0
Hot Potato	15	x2	-2
Wide Load	20	x3	-4
The $#!t	25	x4	-6

Table 2-2: Building Explosive Devices from Scratch

Type (and damage) of Scratch-Built Explosive	Blast Radius	DC	Cost
Improvised (1d6)	5 feet	5	10
Simple (2d6)	5 feet	10	100
Moderate (4d6+1)	10 feet	15	175
Complex (5d6+2)	15 feet	20	250
Powerful (6d6+4)	15 feet	25	500
Devastating (8d6+6)	20 feet	30	750

Add trap to disable attempts +5, +10, or +15 to DC

Table 2-3: Skills

Thunderball Rally uses a mix of new skills as well as skills familiar to D&D players. Unless noted and described in this chapter, you can find descriptions of these skills in the *Player's Handbook*.

Skill	Ability	Untrnd?	Driver	Navigator	Bodyguard
Bluff	Cha	Yes	o	X	o
Climb	Str	Yes	X	X	o
Craft	Int	Yes	o	o	o
Demolitions	Int	No	X	X	o
Diplomacy	Cha	Yes	o	X	X
Disable Device	Int	No	X	o	X
Drive	Dex	Yes	o	o	o
Gather Information	Cha	Yes	o	X	X
Hide	Dex	Yes	X	X	o
Intimidate	Cha	Yes	o	X	o
Jump	Str	Yes	X	X	o
Knowledge	Int	No	o	o	o
Listen	Wis	Yes	o	o	X
Move Silently	Dex	Yes	X	X	o
Pick Pockets	Dex	No	o	o	X
Profession	Wis	No	o	o	o
Read/Write Language	None	No	o	o	o
Repair	Int	No	X	o	X
Search	Int	Yes	X	o	X
Sense Motive	Wis	Yes	X	o	X
Speak Language	None	No	o	o	o
Spot	Wis	Yes	o	o	o
Swim	Str	Yes	X	X	o
Treat Injury	Wis	No	X	o	o
Tumble	Dex	No	X	X	o

o: Class skill
X: Cross-class skill

points must be assigned to one of these specific areas of knowledge.

- Applied Sciences
- Art
- Behavioral Sciences
- Bureaucracy
- Business
- Current Events
- Earth Sciences
- History
- Law
- Life Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Political Science
- Popular Culture
- Streetwise
- Tactics
- Technology
- Theology and Philosophy

Repair (Int, Trained Only): You can fix damaged machinery and electronic devices.

Check: Most repair checks are made to fix complex mechanical, electronic, or computerized devices, such as vehicles, computers, or weapons. The GM sets the DC, using the guidelines suggested below. There is also a monetary cost to making repairs, also shown on Table 2-3.

Simple repairs require no more than a few minutes.

Complex repairs can take multiple hours or more to complete. Working without the proper tools gives you a -5 penalty to the check.

You can make temporary (jury-rigged) repairs. This reduces the DC by 5 and allows you to make the check as a full-round action. However, a jury-rigged repair can only fix a single problem with a check, and the temporary repair only lasts until the end of the current encounter and then the item needs to be completely repaired. The jury-rig function of this skill can be used untrained.

Retry: You can try again, but only if you are aware that the repairs didn't work. The GM may decide that a failed Repair check has negative ramifications that prevent repeated checks.

Treat Injury (Wis, Trained Only): Use this skill to help characters that have been hurt by damage, poison, or disease.

Table 2-4: Jump, Tumble, and Moving Vehicles

If a character falls from a moving vehicle, he takes damage based on the vehicle's speed category. For definitions of speed categories, see Chapter 5: Start Your Engines.

Vehicle Speed	Damage
Stationary	1d6 per 10 feet fallen
Alley	1d8 per 10 feet fallen
Cruising	1d10 per 10 feet fallen
Attack	1d12 per 10 feet fallen
Ramming	1d20 per 10 feet fallen

A character can use Jump (DC 15) to reduce the damage if purposefully jumping from a moving vehicle and can use Tumble (DC 15) to reduce the damage if falling. Success means the character takes one fewer die of damage.

Table 2-5: Repair

Task	DC	Cost
Simple (*tools, simple weapon*)	10	1/5th price
Moderate (*high-tech weapon, electronic component*)	15	1/5th price
Complex (*vehicle component, computer*)	20	1/5th price
Very Complex (*airplane component*)	25	1/10th price

Check: The DC and effect depend on the task you attempt:

Task	DC
Long-term care	15
Treat disease	See below
Treat poison	See below
Use first aid kit	15

Long-term care: Some injuries require treatment that stretches over a number of days. The successful application of this skill allows a patient to recover hit points and ability points (lost to temporary damage) at twice the normal rate: 2 hit points per level for each day of light activity, 3 hit points per level for each day of complete rest, and 2 ability points restored per day. A new check is made each day; on a failed check, the recover rate occurs at the normal rate for that day of rest and care.

You can tend up to as many patients as you have ranks in the skill. You need medical supplies and the patients need to spend all of their time resting. You need to devote at least an hour of the day to each patient for whom you are caring.

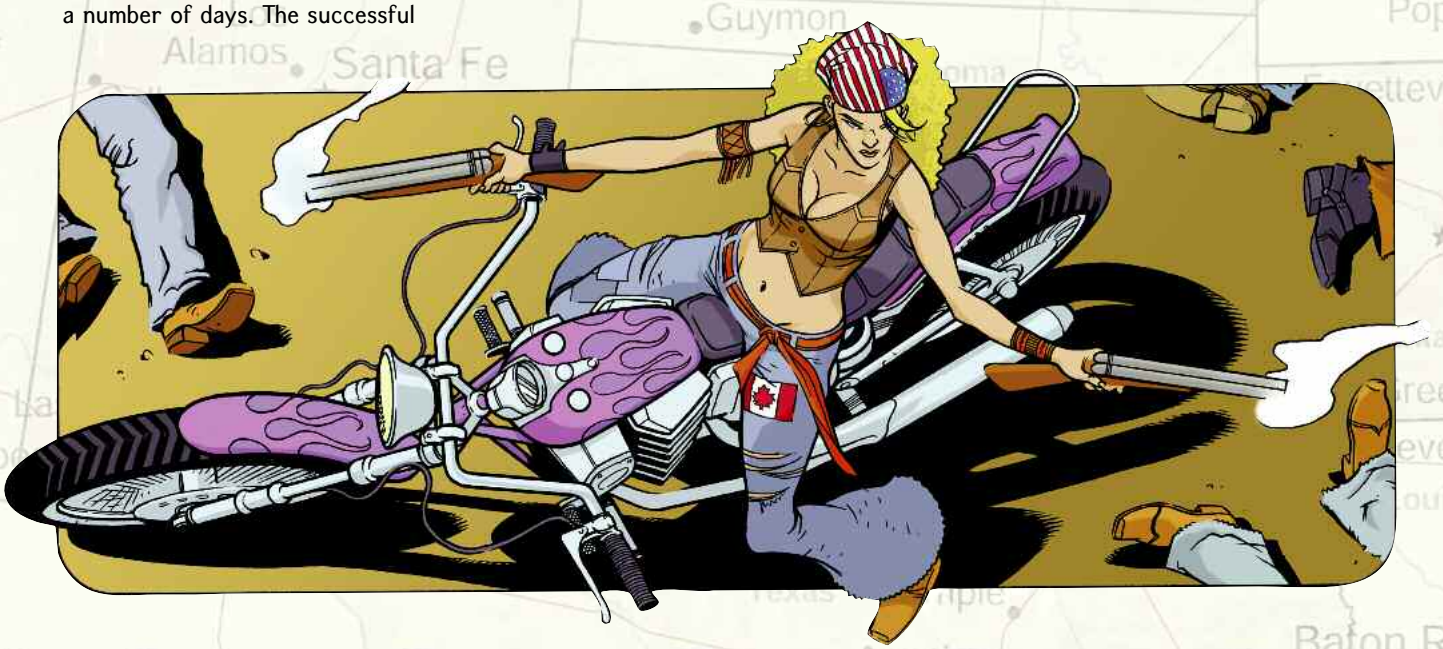
You can't provide long-term care to yourself.

Treat Disease: You can tend to a diseased character. Every time the diseased character makes a saving throw against disease effects (after the initial contamination), you make a Treat Injury check to help the character fend off secondary damage. The diseased character uses your result instead of his own saving throw if your result is higher.

Treat Poison: You can tend to a poisoned character. Every time the poisoned character makes a saving throw against poison effects (after the initial introduction of the poison to his or her system), you make a Treat Injury check to help the character avoid secondary damage. The poisoned character uses your result instead of his own saving throw if your result is higher.

Use First Aid Kit: With a first aid kit and a little skill you can keep a badly wounded character from dying or restore hit points. This check is an attack action.

If a character has negative hit points and is losing more (at 1 per round, 1 per hour, or 1 per day), you can stabilize the character. The character regains no hit points but he or she does stop losing them. A character can be stabilized as often as necessary.



Chapter Three
Feats

Thunderball Rally uses a mix of new feats as well as feats familiar to D&D players. Unless noted and described below, you can find descriptions of these feats in the *Player's Handbook*. Be careful how many additional feats you make available from other sources. Racers only have so many opportunities to gain new feats!

Some feats are marked A or B on Table 3-1: Feats. Aces and bodyguards gain bonus feats at various levels. An "A" indicates the feat is on the list of ace bonus feats. A "B" indicates the feat is on the list of bodyguard bonus feats.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency

You understand how to use military-style firearms and modes of fire.

Prerequisite: Weapons Group Proficiency (basic firearms).

Benefit: You can fire any personal firearm on any setting without penalty.

Normal: A character using autofire without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty to attack rolls.

Archaic Weapon Proficiency

Choose a type of archaic weapon, such as a sword. You understand how to use that type of weapon in combat.

Use this feat to expand the list of weapons you are proficient with beyond the basic lists included with your class description.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character that uses a weapon without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

Back Seat Driver

You know how to give brief, helpful suggestions to the driver of a vehicle.

Benefit: You can spend an action point to assist a driver's Drive check or saving throw as long as you are in the same vehicle as that driver.

Normal: You can only spend action points on another racer's check if you make an aid another action.

Burst Fire

When using a weapon with an automatic setting, you can fire a short burst at an individual target.

Prerequisites: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Wis 13.

Benefits: When using an automatic firearm with at least 5 rounds of ammunition loaded, you may fire a short burst as a single attack against a single target. The attack is -4 to hit, but deals +2 dice of damage (a weapon that deals 3d6 damage, for example, deals 5d6 instead). Firing a burst shoots 5 bullets, and can only be done if the weapon has 5 or more bullets in it.

Normal: Autofire normally targets a 10-foot by 10-foot area, and cannot be aimed at a specific target. See Autofire on page 40.

Cautious

You are especially careful with tasks that may yield catastrophic results.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Demolitions checks and Disable Device checks.

Circuit Heel

Your antics and machinations on the tracks and roadways make you a hated enemy of most ethical racers. You've been the butt of more than one bumper sticker joke, but at least the insignificant losers fear you.

Benefit: You get a +3 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks whenever the GM determines that your notoriety would be a benefit. However, such checks suffer a -3 penalty when the GM determines that your infamy would work against you.

Special: You can't select both Circuit Heel and Circuit Hero.

Circuit Hero

Your racing prowess has made you a minor celebrity. Most racers idolize you, and a line of personalized die-cast metal toy cars might soon be on the way.

Benefit: You get a +3 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks whenever the GM determines that your celebrity status would be a benefit. However, such checks suffer a -3 penalty when the GM determines that your fame would work against you.

Special: You can't select both Circuit Hero and Circuit Heel.

Clipping

You are skilled at using your vehicle as a weapon.

Prerequisites: Drive skill, Vehicle Combat, Drive-By.

Benefit: When performing a side-swipe action, the target takes half the damage from a ram attack, while the

Weapon Definitions

Personal Firearm: Any firearm designed to be carried and used by a single person. This eliminates, for example, rocket launchers (which aren't firearms) and heavy machineguns (which can be fired by one person, but not carried by one person). It includes most of what we think of as "guns."

Handgun: A personal firearm that can be used in one hand without penalty. This includes all pistols and some submachine guns and shotguns.

Longarm: A personal firearm that requires two hands to use without penalty. This includes some submachine guns and shotguns, as well as all rifles and machineguns.

Semi-automatic: Any weapon that does not require cocking between shots. This includes most personal firearms, but not pump-action, level-action, or bolt-action weapons.

Automatic: Any weapon capable of firing on automatic.

Table 3-1: Feats

Feat	Prerequisite
Alertness	–
Ambidexterity	–
Archaic Weapon Proficiency* (B)	–
Back Seat Driver	–
Cautious	–
Circuit Heel (A)	–
Circuit Hero (A)	–
Daredevil (A)	Drive 8 ranks
Dirt Track Demon (A)	Drive 5 ranks
Dodge (B)	Dex 13
Mobility (B)	Dodge
Spring Attack (B)	Mobility, +4 base attack
Exotic Weapon Proficiency* (B)	–
Expertise (B)	Int 13
Improved Disarm (B)	Expertise
Improved Trip (B)	Expertise
Whirlwind Attack (B)	Expertise, Spring Attack
Extra Action Points**	Cha 13
Far Shot (B)	–
Dead Aim (B)	Far Shot, Wis 13
Frightful Presence (A)	Cha 15, Intimidate 9 ranks
Gearhead	–
Heroic Surge	–
Improved Initiative	–
Influence (A)	–
Martial Arts (B)	–
Defensive (B)	Martial Arts
Improved Martial Arts (B)	Martial Arts
Advanced Martial Arts (B)	Improved Martial Arts
Persuasive (A)	–
Point Blank Shot (B)	–
Double-Tap (B)	Point Blank Shot, Dex 13
Precise Shot (B)	Point Blank Shot
Skip Shot (B)	Precise Shot
Shot on the Run (B)	Point Blank Shot, Mobility
Power Attack (B)	Str 13
Cleave (B)	Power Attack
Improved Bull Rush (B)	Power Attack
Sunder (B)	Power Attack
Great Cleave (B)	Cleave, base attack +4
Quick Draw (B)	Base attack bonus +1
Quick Reload (B)	Base attack +1
Simple Weapon Proficiency (B)	–
Skill Emphasis*	–
Stealthy	–
Two-Weapon Fighting (B)	–
Impr. Two-Weapon Fighting (B)	Two-Weapon Fighting, base attack +6, Ambidexterity.
Greater Two-Weapon Fighting (B)	Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, base attack +11.
Vehicle Combat (A, B)	Drive skill
Vehicle Gunnery (A, B)	Vehicle Combat, appro priate weapon profi ciency, Drive skill
Grease the Axles (A)	Vehicle Combat, Drive skill
Drive-By (A)	Vehicle Combat, Drive skill
Clipping (A)	Vehicle Combat, Drive-By, Drive skill
Weapon Focus* (B)	Proficient with weapon, base attack bonus +1
Weapons Group Proficiency (basic firearms) (B)	–
Adv. Firearms Proficiency (B)	Weapons Group Proficiency (basic firearms)
Burst Fire (B)	Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Wis 13
Exotic Firearms Group Proficiency (B)	Advanced Firearms Proficiency
Strafe (B)	Advanced Firearms Proficiency
Window Dive (A)	Dexterity 13, Drive 5 ranks

*You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon or skill.
**You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.

sideswiping vehicle still only takes one-quarter that damage.

Normal: A sideswipe does one-quarter damage to both the sideswiping vehicle and the target.

Daredevil

You are a trained stunt driver.

Prerequisites: 8 ranks in Drive.

Benefit: You may perform one additional stunt per round.

Dead Aim

You are capable of lining up precise and deadly shots with a firearm.

Prerequisites: Far Shot, Wis 13.

Benefit: Before shooting, you may take a full-round action to line up your shot. Doing so gives you a +2 circumstance bonus to your attack. Once you begin aiming, you cannot move (even to take a 5-foot step) until after you fire, or the benefit of aiming is lost. Likewise, if you are jostled or attacked, you loose the benefit of aiming (you cannot make a Concentration check to continue aiming).

Special: If you have a special ability that allows you to deal sneak attack damage, you can deal that damage with a ranged attack, even if you are out of the normal range for sneak attack damage, if you take the full-round action to aim.

Dirt Track Demon

You are accustomed to driving off-road.

Prerequisites: 5 ranks in Drive.

Benefit: You gain a +2 competence bonus to Drive and attack rolls when operating a vehicle off-road. You treat very poor terrain as poor, poor terrain as difficult, and difficult terrain as normal (see Table 5-6: Conditional Modifiers to Vehicle Movement and

Drive Checks) for both movement multipliers and Drive check penalties.

Double-Tap
You can fire two quick shots as a single attack.

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot, Dex 13.

Benefit: When using a semi-automatic firearm with at least 2 rounds of ammunition loaded, you may fire two rounds with a single attack against a single target. You suffer a -2 penalty to your attack, but you deal +1 die of damage (a weapon that deals 3d6 damage, for example, deals 4d6 instead). Other feats and situational modifiers may modify the attack roll. Double-tapping shoots 2 bullets, and can only be done if the weapon has 2 or more bullets in it.

Drive-By
You are skilled at fast attacks from a moving vehicle.

Prerequisite: 1 rank in Drive, Vehicle Combat.

Benefit: When you are in a vehicle, you can move both before and after an attack action, provided that your total distance moved is not greater than your vehicle's speed. Moving in this way does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the defender you attack. You can't take more than a double move and use this feat.

Exotic Firearms Group Proficiency
Choose a group of weapons from the following list: heavy machineguns, flamethrowers, grenade launchers, or rocket launchers. You understand how to use all weapons of that group in combat.

Prerequisites: Advanced Firearms Proficiency.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character that uses a weapon without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a different weapon group.

Extra Action Points
You have a knack for getting out of difficult situations.

Benefit: You get 1d4+1 action points.

Far Shot
You can get greater distance out of a ranged weapon.

Benefit: When you use a firearm or projectile weapon (such as a crossbow), its range increment increases by one-half (multiply by 1.5). When you use a thrown weapon (such as a grenade), its range increment is doubled.

Frightful Presence
Your mere presence can terrify those around you.

Benefit: Once per round you can, as a free action, use your Frightful Presence. All opponents within 30 feet who have fewer levels than you must make a Will saving throw (DC 10 plus your level and Charisma modifier). An opponent who fails the save is shaken, suffering a -2 penalty to attack rolls, saves, and skill checks for a number of rounds equal to 1d6 plus your Charisma modifier rounds.

Gearhead
You have a way with machines.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Repair checks and Disable Device checks.

Grease the Axles
You are trained in using your vehicle against pedestrians.

Prerequisites: Drive skill, Vehicle Combat

Benefit: When you attempt to ram with your vehicle, you do not suffer the normal -2 penalty to Defense.

Greater Two-Weapon Fighting
You are a master at fighting with a weapon in each hand.

Prerequisites: Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, base attack +11.

Benefit: You get a third attack with your off-hand weapon, albeit at an additional -10 penalty.

Heroic Surge
You can perform additional actions in a round.

Benefit: You may take an action in a round, either before or after your regular actions. You can use Heroic Surge a number of times per day, depending on your level, but never more than

once per round. 1st-4th level: 1/day; 5th-8th level: 2/day; 9th-12th level: 3/day; 13th-16th level: 4/day; 17th-20th level: 5/day.

Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

This functions like the Improved Two-Weapon Fighting feat in the *Player's Handbook*, save that it also includes fighting with a firearm in each hand, or with a firearm in one hand and a melee weapon in the other.

Influence

Because you are so good at manipulating the feelings and expectations of others, you find it easier to persuade people.

Benefits: You get a +3 circumstance bonus to your Reputation checks (see Chapter 6).

Point Blank Shot

You are skilled at making well-placed shots with ranged weapons at close range.

Benefit: You get a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls with ranged weapons against opponents up to 10 meters from your position.

Precise Shot

You are skilled at timing and aiming ranged attacks.

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: You can shoot or throw ranged weapons at an opponent engaged in melee without suffering the standard -4 penalty (see Shooting or Throwing into a Melee in Chapter 8: Combat of the *Player's Handbook*).

Quick Reload

You can reload a firearm with startling speed.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Reloading a weapon with an already filled box magazine or speed loader is a free action. Reloading a weapon with an internal magazine is a move action.

Normal: Reloading a weapon with an already filled box magazine or speed loader is a move action. Reloading a weapon with an internal magazine is a full-round action.

Shot on the Run

You are highly trained in skirmish ranged weapon tactics.

Prerequisites: Point Blank Shot, Dex 13, Dodge, Mobility.

Benefit: When using the attack action with a ranged weapon, you can move both before and after the attack, provided that your total distance is not greater than your speed.

Skip Shot

You can shoot a firearm to ricochet a shot around cover.

Prerequisites: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Benefit: If you have a solid, relatively smooth surface on which to skip a bullet (such as a street or concrete wall), and a target within 10 feet of that surface, you may ignore cover between you and the target. However, you suffer a -2 penalty to your attack, and your attack deals -1 die of damage (a weapon that deals 3d6 damage, for example, deals 2d6 instead).

Special: The surface does not have to be perfectly smooth and level—a brick wall or an asphalt road can be used. The target must be at least partially visible. For example, it is possible to hit a target hiding behind a car by skipping a shot underneath it, but you cannot hit someone around a corner if you cannot see any part of him or her.

Stealthy

You are particularly good at avoiding notice.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Hide checks and Move Silently checks.

Strafe

You can use an automatic weapon to affect a wider area than normal.

Prerequisite: Advanced Firearms Proficiency.

Benefit: When using a firearm on an automatic setting, you can affect a 5-foot by 20-foot area perpendicular to your line of sight.

Normal: When normally firing a weapon on automatic, you affect a 10-foot by 10-foot area.

Two-Weapon Fighting

This functions exactly like the Two-Weapon Fighting feat in the *Player's Handbook*, save that it also includes fighting with a firearm in each hand, or with a firearm in one hand and a melee weapon in the other.

Vehicle Combat

You are skilled in fighting with your vehicle.

Prerequisite: 1 rank Drive.

Benefit: Once per round, when your vehicle is hit in combat, you may make a Drive check to negate the hit. The hit is negated if your Drive check is greater than the attack roll (essentially the Drive check becomes the vehicle's defense if it's higher than the vehicle's regular defense).

Vehicle Gunnery

You are skilled at using ranged weapons from a vehicle.

Prerequisite: Drive skill, appropriate weapon proficiency, Vehicle Combat.

Benefit: When in a vehicle and using a ranged weapon with which you are proficient, the penalty you suffer when using a ranged weapon from a vehicle is eliminated.

Weapons Group Proficiency (Basic Firearms)

You understand how to use basic firearms.

Benefit: You can fire any personal firearm that has a single shot setting in single shot mode without penalty. You are not proficient in autofire.

Normal: A character using a firearm without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty to attacks.

Window Dive

You are accustomed to entering cars through the window, rather than by opening the door.

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13, 5 ranks in Drive.

Benefit: You can start any vehicle as part of a move action, provided you end that movement in the car.

Normal: You can start most vehicles with a move action and a standard action.

CHAPTER FOUR

Weapons and Combat

In addition to the archaic and simple weapons listed in the *Player's Handbook*, (note that weapons classified as martial become archaic in *Thunderball Rally*), the modern-day weapons on chart 4-1 are available in the game.

Combat and Game Play

If you know how to play D&D, you know how to play *Thunderball Rally*. There are a few differences to account for the contemporary setting. These are detailed below.

Attacks of Opportunity

A character with a modern ranged weapon in hand threatens an area that extends 10 feet within his field of vision. An enemy that takes certain actions while in your threatened area provokes an attack of opportunity with your ranged weapon. Unless you have the Combat Reflexes feat, you can only make one attack of opportunity in a round whether with a melee weapon or ranged weapon.

Action Types

The following types of actions define the time frame for how long certain activities take to complete. A round consists of an attack action and a move action, or two move actions, or a full-round action, as described below.

Reactions

Some skill checks are instant. They are reactions to an event, such as making a Ride check to stay on a horse when the horse rears unexpectedly. Some are tests of what a character notices or recognizes, such as a Listen check to notice a thug sneaking up behind you. You can only make as many of these checks in a round as the situation calls for. In game terms, they take no time and are not considered actions.

Attack Action

An attack action allows you to make an attack, use a skill or feat (unless the skill or feat requires a full-round action to perform; see below), or perform other similar actions. During a combat round, you can perform an attack action and move up to your speed. You can move before or after performing an attack action.

Move Action

A move action allows you to move your speed in a round or perform a similar action (a driver uses his move action to move the vehicle). You can move your speed, climb, draw a weapon, reload a weapon, pick up an item, make a Drive skill check to make a maneuver, or move a heavy object as a move action.

In a combat round, you can perform an attack action and move your speed, or you can move first and then perform an attack action. You can also perform two move actions in a round instead, using your second move in place of your attack action.

If the action you take during a round results in your moving no actual distance, you can take a 5-foot step.

Full-Round Action

A full-round action consumes all your effort during a round. The only movement you can take when performing a full-round action is a 5-foot step before, during, or after the action. Attacking more than once (if you are permitted to do so) or using a skill or feat that requires a full round to accomplish, such as using Search to examine a 5-foot-by-5-foot area, requires the use of a full-round action.

Free Action

Free actins consume a very small amount of time and effort, and over the span of a round their impact is so minor that they are considered to be free. You can perform one or more free actions while taking another action normally. However, the GM puts reasonable limits on what you can really do for free in the span of 6 seconds. Talking is generally considered a free action, but the GM may wish to limit the amount of chatter that might reasonably be exchanged in a single round.

Longer Than a Round

Some applications of skills take longer than a round to perform. The GM or the skill description sets the time frame for some types of actions.

Firearms Combat

Chapter 3 contains a breakdown of different weapon types as well as several feats which allow racers to make the most of their weapons. The following rules apply to shooters who do not possess these feats.

The basic rules for firearms allow them to be used in two ways: single shot and autofire. Other modes of attack require specialized feats.

Single-Shot Firearms

Most firearms have a single-shot setting, which allows the firer to shoot a single bullet at a single target by pulling the trigger once.

The feat Weapons Group Proficiency (basic firearms) allows you to make this sort of attack without the usual -4 nonproficient penalty.

Autofire

If a weapon has an automatic setting, you may fire it on automatic. You target a 10-foot by 10-foot area and make an attack roll against defense 10. Every creature within the affected area must make a Reflex save (DC 10 plus the amount by which the attack was made; effectively, the DC is equal to the attack result) or take the weapon's damage. Autofire shoots 10 bullets, and can only be done if the weapon has 10 bullets in it.

The feat Advanced Firearms Proficiency (basic firearms) allows you to make this sort of attack without the usual -4 nonproficient penalty.

Reloading

Reloading a weapon with an already-filled box magazine or speed loader is a move action. Refilling a box magazine or a speed loader, or reloading a revolver or any weapon with an internal magazine, is a full-round action.

Table 4-1: Firearms

Name	Caliber	Magazine	Acc. Bonus	Range	Dam.	Crit.	ROF	Size	Weight	Cost
Handguns										
Zip Gun	.22	1I	+0	10 ft.	2d4	20	1	T	18.5 oz.	$576
Pistol	.45	7+1B	+0	20 ft.	2d6	20	1	T	39 oz.	$747
Sub-Machine Guns										
Tommy Gun	.45	30	+1	20 ft.	2d6	20	A	M	10 lb. 12 oz.	$800
Rifles & Shotguns										
Assault Rifle	5.56mm	30B	+0	90 ft.	2d8	19-20	1, A	L	12 lb. 12 oz.	$1200
Hunting Rifle	.444	6I	+0	90 ft.	2d10	20	1	M	6.5 lb.	$465
Sawed-Off	12 ga.	2I	+1	10 ft.	2d8	19-20	1	S	4 lb.	$1000
Pump	12 ga.	6I	+1	30 ft.	2d8	20	1	M	6 lb., 6 oz.	$1000

Caliber: This is the diameter of the bullet fired in either millimeters or hundredths of an inch. Shotguns use a different system, where the smaller the gauge the larger the barrel's diameter.

Acc. Bonus: Some weapons grant a +1 accuracy bonus to attack rolls made by proficient users.

Magazine: This lists the number of bullets carried in the weapon. When listed as #+1, this indicates that the magazine carries the listed number of cartridges and the weapon can carry another cartridge in the chamber.

B: A box magazine, sometimes called a "clip," is a container for firearm cartridges with a spring in the bottom to push the cartridges up into the weapon. You can remove it from the weapon as a move-equivalent action, and replace with another, fully-loaded one.

I: An internal magazine must be reloaded one cartridge at a time.

Range: Any attack of less than this distance is not penalized for range, so a pistol can fire at enemies up to 19 feet away with no penalty. However, each full range increment causes a cumulative -2 penalty to the attack roll. Firing at a target 75 feet away suffers a -6 attack penalty (because 75 feet is at least three range increments but not four increments). Firearms may, at the GM's discretion, have a maximum range of ten increments.

Dam: The Damage column gives the damage you deal with a weapon when you score a hit.

Crit.: The entry in this column notes a weapon's critical threat range.

ROF: This column indicates rate of fire for the weapon. 1 indicates the weapon fires single shots. A indicates the weapon fires on full automatic. If more than one entry appears the player may choose which rate of fire his character uses on his action.

Size: This column indicates the weapon's size—T is Tiny, S is Small, M is Medium-sized, and L is Large.

Weight: This column gives the weapon's weight

Cost: This column gives the weapon's cost in US dollars.

Firing into Melee and Grapples

Firing into melee imposes a -4 penalty on the shooter. This is true even if the shooter is involved in the melee himself, and even if the target is the only other combatant in the melee. In other words, firing at an opponent who is within 5 feet of you imposes a -4 penalty to your attack.

Firing at a grappled opponent is different. A shot fired into a grapple actually attacks a random grappler. In other words, if you fire at a target that is grappled with one other combatant, you actually have a 50% chance of shooting the other guy! Furthermore, this rule applies even if you are one of the grapplers. If you fire a gun at an opponent with whom you're grappling, you are just as likely to accidentally shoot at yourself.

Once you've made your attack roll, roll randomly to determine which combatant is targeted. You cannot change your mind and choose not to fire based on the result; you must fire at the combatant that is targeted, even if it's you. Remember that a grappling target does not get to include his Dex modifier in his Defense.

Attacks of Opportunity and Firearms

In most ways, firearms are like other forms of ranged weapons. But handguns in particular are in some manners more comparable to melee weapons in terms of how they draw attacks of opportunity.

Longarms are just like other ranged weapons: They draw attacks of opportunity when fired.

Handguns are a little different. A handgun does not draw an attack of opportunity from the opponent at which it is fired, but does draw attacks of opportunity from all other opponents.

Concealing Weapons

Few racers can carry their weapons openly almost everywhere they go. An obvious weapon is rarely appropriate—and even when it is, a racer might want to conceal a backup weapon to supplement the M-16 slung over her shoulder.

It's assumed that, when attempting to conceal a weapon, the character wears appropriate clothing—something moderately loose and bulky. Tighter or skimpier clothes make concealment harder, while larger clothes, like cloaks or long coats, make it easier.

Drawing a concealed weapon is harder than drawing a regularly holstered weapon, and normally requires an attack action. Keeping the weapon in an easier-to-draw position makes concealing it a bit harder.

To conceal a weapon, make a Pick Pockets check. A character concealing a weapon before she heads out into public should usually take 10, unless

she's rushed, trying to conceal it when others might see her, or under other unusual constraints. Characters untrained in Pick Pockets cannot roll to conceal a weapon. If you have no ranks in Pick Pockets, your result is automatically a 10.

The weapon's size imposes a penalty to the total, as shown on the table below. The type of clothing worn, and any attempt to make the weapon easier to draw, can also affect the roll.

Condition	Concealment Modifier
Weapon is Tiny	+4
Weapon is Small	no penalty
Weapon is Medium	-4
Weapon is Large	-8
Clothing is tight or small	-4
Clothing is especially loose or bulky	+2
Clothing is specifically modified for concealing weapon	+6
Weapon can be drawn normally	-2
Weapon can be drawn as free action with Quickdraw feat	-4

Noticing a concealed weapon requires a Spot check. The DC varies: If the target made a roll, the Spot check is simply opposed by her result. If she took 10, use this formula:

Spot DC = Pick Pockets skill modifier - concealment modifier + 10

Patting someone down for a hidden weapon is a similar check. However, the skill employed is Search, and the searcher gets a +4 circumstance bonus for the hands-on act of patting the target down.

The size modifiers on the table above only apply to weapons. Weapon size designations are not completely compatible with size designations for other objects. (A chair, for example, is a Small object, even though it is much bigger than many Large weapons.) When using these rules to conceal objects other than weapons, pick a modifier based on a comparably sized weapon, not on the object size.

Firearm Descriptions

Assault Rifle: Typical of the assault rifles used by militaries around the world.

Pistol: The classic heavy-caliber semi-automatic pistol.

Pump: The pump-action shotgun fires 12 gauge, 3-inch shells.

Sawed-Off: A 12-gauge, double-barreled shotgun with the stock and barrels sawed short. All that's left of the stock is a pistol grip, and the barrels are roughly 12 inches long. This is a homemade conversion of a sporting shotgun (price reflects the purchase of a full-sized, unmodified weapon). Possession of a sawed-off shotgun is generally against the law.

Tommy Gun: A typical submachine gun. It fires the same cartridges used by the pistol.

Zip Gun: A homemade, .22 pistol manufactured using a piece of metal tubing, a nail for a firing pin, and surgical rubber tubing to drive the nail into the cartridge.

Grenades and Grenade-like Weapons

A grenade-like weapon is one that "splashes." It has a broad enough effect that it can hurt characters just by landing close to them.

Grenade Types

Acid: You can throw a flask of acid as a grenade-like weapon. A flask is made of ceramic, metal, or glass (depending on the substance it has to hold), with a tight stopper, and holds about 1 pint of liquid. This entry represents any caustic substance. Acid may be purchased in many places, including hardware stores.

Dynamite: Perhaps one of the most common and straightforward explosives, dynamite is very stable under normal conditions. A stick of dynamite requires a fuse or detonator to explode. Extra sticks detonated together increase the damage by +1d6 and the radius by a foot. Dynamite does require a license to purchase, but is available outside the military and police.

Fragmentation Grenade: The most common military grenade, this is a small explosive device that sprays shrapnel in all directions when it explodes. Fragmentation grenades are unavailable outside the military or organized crime.

Table 4-2: Melee Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type	Size	Proficiency Type
Brass Knuckles	$30	+1d4	20	–	1 kg	B	Tiny	Simple
Tire iron	$20	1d6	20	10 ft.	1 kg	B	Medium	Simple
Hatchet	$15	1d6	20	10 ft.	2 kg	S	Small	Martial
Knife	$50	1d4	19-20	10 ft.	.5 kg	P	Tiny	Simple
Heavy Cleaver	$30	1d6	20	–	1 kg	S	Small	Simple
Machete	$30	1d6	19-20	–	1 kg	S	Medium	Simple
Wrecking Bar	$25	1d6/1d6	20	–	7 kg	B	Large	Martial
Nunchaku	$10	1d6	20	–	1 kg	B	Small	Exotic
Chain*®	$30	1d6/1d6	20	–	2 kg	B	Large	Exotic

* See the description of this weapon for special rules
® Double Weapon
Range Increment: Thrown weapons have a maximum range of up to five range increments.

Table 4-3: Grenades and Grenade-like Weapons

Weapon*	Damage Direct Hit	Damage Splash**	Range Increment	Radius	Weight	Cost
Acid	1d6	1	10 ft.	5 ft.	1 lb.	$10
Dynamite (1 stick)	4d6	NA	10 ft.	10 ft.	1 lb.	$5
Fragmentation Grenades	3d6	NA	10 ft.	20 ft.	1 lb.	$75
Molotov Cocktail	1d6	1	10 ft.	10 ft.	1 lb.	$0
Smoke Grenades	NA	NA	10 ft.	40 ft.	2 lb.	$20
White Phosphorous Grenades	3d6	NA	10 ft.	20 ft.	2 lb.	$75

*Grenades and grenade-like weapons require no proficiency to use. See text for full details on using these weapons.
**Grenade-like weapons deal splash damage to all creatures within 5 feet of where they land.
Range Increment: Thrown weapons have a maximum range of up to five range increments.

Molotov Cocktail: A Molotov cocktail is an incendiary device made by pouring pure alcohol, very high proof liquor, or gasoline into a bottle, inserting a rag, and lighting the rag on fire. A simple Intelligence check (DC 5, and characters with ranks in Repair or Demolitions may use those skill bonuses instead) is all that's necessary to make one. The homemade device ignites in 2 rounds, or on impact, whichever comes first. On the round following a direct hit, the target takes an additional 1d6 points of fire damage. The target can take a full-round action to attempt to extinguish the flames before taking this additional damage. It takes a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to extinguish the flames. Rolling on the ground allows the character a +2 bonus. Leaping into a lake or dousing the burning character with a fire extinguisher automatically smothers the flames.

Smoke Grenade: These create temporary concealment. The cloud obscures all sight beyond 5 feet. A racer or vehicle within 5 feet has one-half concealment (attacks suffer a 20% miss chance). Racers and vehicles farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target). A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the smoke in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the smoke in 1 round. Smoke grenades are available in several colors, including white, red, yellow, green, and purple. Smoke grenades can occasionally be purchased in military surplus stores.

White Phosphorous Grenades: White phosphorous grenades use an explosive charge to distribute white phosphorous over the radius of effect. White phosphorous burns on contact with oxygen. On the round following a damage from a WP grenade, all damaged characters take an additional 1d6 points of fire damage. Only full submersion in water or mud stops the damage. Medical treatment is required to remove the particles of phosphorous.

In addition, WP grenades create clouds of smoke. The cloud obscures all sight beyond 5 feet. A racer or vehicle within 5 feet has one-half concealment (attacks suffer a 20% miss chance). Racers and vehicles farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target). A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the smoke in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the smoke in 1 round.

WP grenades are available only through the military and organized criminal groups.

CHAPTER FIVE

Start Your Engines!

In 1974, the United States government committed the greatest crime against its citizens that you can imagine: It established a national speed limit of 55 miles per hour on U.S. highways. Last year, automobile manufacturers began making cars with catalytic converters, forcing the nation to fill up with wimpy unleaded gas.

No more! This sweltering Summer of '76 is about the smell of burning rubber, the scream of turbochargers, the wind in your face, the scenery a blur out your window, and the sweet taste of victory!

But first, you've got to learn how to drive.

Skills

The complete D20 Modern game uses skills such as Drive, Pilot, and Handle Animal to cover assisted movement. Since *Thunderball Rally* focuses on racing cars from one coast of the United States to the other, we use Drive exclusively in these rules for convenience.

A Note About Technology

These rules primarily present technology available in the 1970s. Airbags, infrared sensors, windshield heads-up displays, halogen headlights, curb feelers, under-car fluorescent lights, and satellite navigation systems are decades ahead of this game.

Vehicle Costs

Vehicles described in this chapter can be purchased for the costs listed. Supply and demand may cause the listed price to fluctuate. The Internet is a good place to look for the price of your favorite '70s vehicle.

Vehicle Systems

Vehicles range from simple to complex, and size isn't always what sets the complexity. Aircraft are inherently more complex than ground vehicles, for instance.

Engines: The primary source of power for vehicles in the modern world is internal combustion. Whether simple internal combustion engine, diesel, rotary, or turbine, they're all based on similar principles. However, some vehicles are powered by human muscle, some are powered by animals, and others are powered by wind or gravity.

Sensors: Essentially, sensors allow you to make Spot or Search checks at ranges or in situations in which they are not otherwise possible. The most common sensor used in the modern world is radar. Sonar is a close second, with the advent of tiny sonar systems used by fishing boats. Technically, headlights or night-vision systems also fall into this category.

Communications: Before cell phones, some vehicles carried radio transceivers operating on VHF, FM, or CB frequencies. The need for vehicle-mounted communication systems drops off after the advent of cellular phones.

Vehicle Movement

This section presents rules for moving vehicles on the same scale as characters and creatures, though in most cases vehicles move considerably faster. These rules explain how to handle simple maneuvers and stunts (maneuvers requiring Drive checks), what happens when stunts fail, and how to resolve combat between individuals and vehicles.

Using a Square Grid: As with personal combat, vehicle combat plays out on a square grid, with each square being 5-feet on a side. Vehicles often have extraordinary speeds, ranging from a mere 30 feet per action to much, much faster. If there are no slow-moving combatants involved, consider changing the size of each square

to 50 feet on a side, and divide the movement cost of maneuvers by 10.

Mapping Vehicle Combat

Considering that a normal move for most vehicles is hundreds of feet per round, mapping can be a trying process. If everyone involved in a combat is riding in or driving a vehicle, all that's important is the relative position of the vehicles, and any obstacles the GM wants thrown in their path. In such a case, you may choose to use the map grid to indicate the distance between the vehicles and their positions relative to each other. You never have to move the vehicles on the map when using this option unless their relative distance or positions change. Place obstacles when the vehicles approach them, and remove the obstacles once the vehicles pass them. You may find this makes mapping vehicle combat much easier.

Battlemats and Vehicle Combat: Battlemats work well with Matchbox® and Hot Wheels® cars. Treat each 1-inch square on the map as a 10-foot square. You can experiment with model railroad scale cars and figures as well, but they're a smaller scale making the map squares roughly 20-feet.

Thunderball Rally also includes many to-scale overhead car illustrations sized to fit on a standard grid of 5-foot squares.

Vehicles that Occupy Multiple Squares: Most vehicles are large enough to occupy multiple squares on the map grid. Even the average automobile is more than 5 feet wide and 5 feet long. Exactly how many spaces a vehicle occupies is covered in the vehicle's specific description at the end of this section.

When moving vehicles that occupy more than one square, count the squares from ground vehicles' rear squares. When turning, pivot ground vehicles on the rear square toward which they are turning (so a car making a left turn pivots on the left rear square). When firing weapons, count squares from the location of the weapon.

Multiple vehicles cannot occupy the same square unless they are at different altitudes.

Vehicle Sizes

Vehicles use the same size categories that characters and creatures do. Table 5-2: Vehicle Sizes shows size category, size modifier, the length in feet, and examples of vehicles in that category.

Getting Started

Most vehicles require only a move action to enter and a standard action to start. From that moment they are ready to roll.

Vehicle Speed Categories

At the beginning of a driver's action, the player must declare how much movement he intends to use during his action. As shown in Table 5-3: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers, a vehicle's speed determines how far the vehicle can travel in a single move action (in feet), the vehicle crew's modifiers to attack rolls and skill checks, and the vehicle's bonus to Defense. The vehicle can change speed only at the beginning of the driver's action, not during.

At the beginning of a combat, the GM must decide how fast GM-controlled vehicles are moving. Use the maximum speed of the slowest vehicle in the group as the default.

Buying a Used Vehicle

Buying a used vehicle is always a dodgy proposition. How much do you trust the seller? Is she covering up a faulty engine or jury-rigged wiring? Or is the body held together with duct tape and Bondo?

To simulate this situation, the GM can roll D% to determine the used vehicle's general quality. The result indicates the flaw (or flaws) possessed by the vehicle.

In most cases, a malfunction or flaw can be detected by a successful Repair or Craft (engineering) check (DC 20) and a few hours of poking around. The GM also can allow characters to use alternative skills for these checks. For instance, a Computer Use check might notice problems with the sensors or fire control systems. Unfortunately, many sellers discourage the attention of such careful buyers.

At the GM's discretion, most of these flaws can be repaired, though they are considered complex repair jobs at best. See the Repair skill in Chapter 2: Skills for more information.

Price of a Used Vehicle

The exact price of a used vehicle is up to your GM. The GM sets a price that's at least 50% of the original vehicle price, and as much as 90% of the original vehicle price.

Table 5-1: Used Vehicle Flaws

D%	Flaw
01-30	None
31-50	Jury-rigged systems: -4 penalty to Repair checks made to fix vehicle.
51-60	Burned-out engine: -4 penalty to Drive skill checks made to pursue vehicles.
61-70	Shaky steering: -4 penalty to Drive skill checks to turn or reverse direction, establish or break pur suit, ram a target, avoid a hazard, or regain control.
71-75	Malfunctioning Sensors: -4 to all skill checks made to operate sensors. This may be as trivial as burned out headlights if the vehicle has no other sensors.
76-80	Malfunctioning Fire Control: Reduce all fire control bonuses by 4 (minimum +0). If the vehicle has no fire control system, roll again on this table.
81-90	Hull Damage: Subtract 10% from maximum hull points.
91-95	Other: The GM is encouraged to be fiendish.
96-00	Roll two more times on this table.

Maneuvers

During vehicle combat, a vehicle moves about on the same map grid used in normal combat, through higher speeds can carry it quickly beyond the edges of the map. A vehicle can move only during a move action; basic movement requires no skill check.

A driver can make one attack action and one move action per round, or two move actions if he chooses not to attack (just as in normal combat, but if the driver and gunner are two different people, the driver can make two move actions while the gunner attacks).

There are two kinds of vehicle movement: simple maneuvers and stunts.

Table 5-2: Vehicle Sizes

Standard Scale	Modifier	Length (ft)	Examples
Colossal	+1	61-150	Yacht
Gargantuan	+2	31-60	Trucks
Huge	+4	15-30	Most automobiles
Large	+8	Up to 15	Motorcycle
Medium	+12		Human being
Small	+16		
Tiny	+20		
Diminutive	+24		
Fine	+28		

Simple Maneuver: Simple maneuvers (moving forward, moving backward, slipping, and turning) allow a car to move a specified number of squares on the map grid, as determined by its speed. As simple maneuvers are easy to perform, they do not require Drive checks.

As a move action, a driver can perform any number of simple maneuvers provided that the total number of squares moved does not exceed the vehicle's speed.

A vehicle does not have to spend all its movement during its turn; unspent movement simply indicates that the vehicle is moving at less than top speed.

Stunt: Stunts are difficult and sometimes daring maneuvers that enable a driver to change his vehicle's heading or orientation at no movement cost. A stunt can be attempted as a free action during the driver's move action. Stunts always require Drive skill checks. A driver can attempt only one stunt per move action.

Simple Maneuvers

As a move action, the racer driving a vehicle can perform the following maneuvers, expending movement or making a Drive skill check to negate the movement expenditure.

Forward and Reverse: All vehicles are capable of forward movement; the driver's only decision is how fast to go. A driver can always choose to advance more slowly than his vehicle's maximum speed. Bad terrain and obstacles might also slow the vehicle.

Traveling in reverse is somewhat more limiting, as most vehicles aren't geared to go full speed in reverse. Any vehicle can travel backward at alley speed or two speed categories less than the vehicle's maximum speed category, whichever is greater.

A vehicle cannot combine forward and reverse movement during a single move action.

Diagonal Movement: Moving diagonally (across the corner of a square) costs additional movement. The first diagonal move a vehicle makes during each action costs 1 square of movement. The second costs 2 squares of movement. The third costs 1, and so on. Thus, moving 2 squares diagonally is treated as having moved 3 squares.

Simple Slip: A driver might wish to move to the side without changing the vehicle's facing, for instance to change lanes. This is called a slip, and it allows the vehicle to avoid obstacles without slowing down to change facing. The simple slip moves the vehicle 1 square forward or back and 1 square to the right or left, and costs 3 squares of movement. With sufficient movement, a driver can perform multiple simple slips in the same action.

Tracked vehicles cannot perform simple slips.

Diagonal Simple Slip: When the vehicle faces a corner of its square instead of a side, a simple slip moves it into the forward left or right square and costs 3 squares of movement.

Diagonal Side Slips: Vehicles facing the corner of a square move into the forward left or right square, and then move one more square left or right (in the same direction only).

45-Degree Turn: Any vehicle can make a simple 45-degree turn by expending 1 square of movement. Before a vehicle can turn, it must move at least 1 square forward. Turning completely around and moving back the opposite direction (a half-circle) costs 8 squares of movement.

Table 5-3: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers

Speed Category	Movement Feet	5-foot Squares	Defense Modifier	Check/Roll Modifier
Stationary	0	0	+0	+0*
Alley	1-30	2-6	+2	+0
Cruising	31-300	6-60	+4	-1
Attack	301-750	60-150	+6	-2
Ramming**	751-1500	150-300	+8	-4

*A stationary vehicle cannot make Drive checks except to turn.

**Ramming speed is impossible for some vehicles in this game, while others can only achieve it through a double-move.

Stationary: The vehicle is motionless.

Alley: This speed is used for safely maneuvering a vehicle in tight spaces, such as alleys or parking garages.

Cruising: The vehicle is traveling at a normal cruising speed.

Attack: The vehicle is moving at combat speed.

Ramming: The vehicle is traveling at top speed.

Stunts

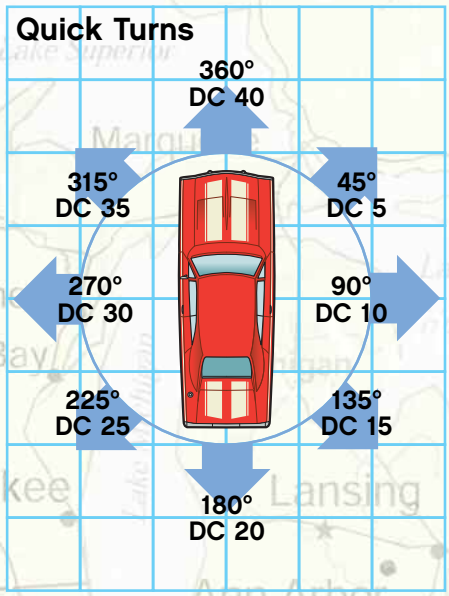
The following actions always require a Drive check to perform successfully. Stunts allow a driver to perform special maneuvers without expending movement. Drivers must immediately check for loss of control if the Drive check fails by 10 or more. Remember that Table 5-3: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers affects all the Drive checks described here.

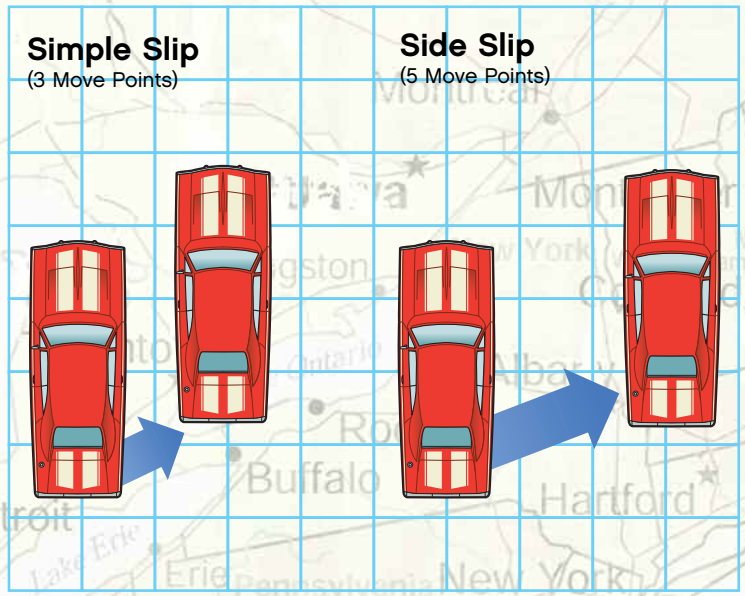
Quick Turns: A quick turn allows a vehicle to turn without first moving forward 1 square. The Quick Turns diagram illustrates the DCs of a right or left turn, ranging from 45 to 180 degrees. A 180-degree Quick Turn is known as a "bootlegger reverse."

Failed Quick Turns: When a pilot fails a quick turn stunt, reduce the angle of the turn 45 degrees for every increment of 5 below the DC. For instance, a driver attempting a 180-degree turn (DC 20) rolls a 10. The vehicle can only turn 90 degrees. As with all failed stunts, the driver must immediately check for loss of control if the Drive check fails by 10 or more.

Attack Runs: A vehicle can ignore normal defensive maneuvering to line itself up with its target, gaining a bonus to attacks made against the target. The attacking vehicle must move straight toward the target, without turning or otherwise maneuvering, for at least half of its declared movement for that action. Until it actually passes the target, the attacking vehicle can fire its forward-facing weapons at the target, at any point along the attacking vehicle's movement.

This stunt requires a successful Drive check (DC 10) as part of the





vehicle's movement. If successful, the vehicle gains a +2 circumstance bonus to attacks made with weapons in the front firing arc but also suffers a -2 penalty to Defense. A vehicle making an attack run cannot fight defensively.

Up on Two Wheels: This stunt requires a successful Drive check (DC 10) as part of the vehicle's movement, and some low ramp to raise one side of the vehicle. Treat the vehicle as being half as wide while up on two wheels. Vehicles may not travel at more than Cruising speed while up on two wheels. Another Drive check (DC 10) is required as part of the vehicle's movement to return to having four wheels on the ground. Other crew may assist with this roll.

Jump: Jumping a car requires a successful Drive check, but there is no set DC. Instead, use the rules for the Jump skill in the *Player's Handbook*, substituting the Drive check for the Jump check. Vehicle jumps always count as running jumps, and vehicles must be moving at least Cruising speed to jump. In addition, divide the vehicle's current speed by 60 (the base speed for a Medium-sized character making a full move). Multiply the distance jumped by the result to get the distance the car jumps. Other crew members cannot assist with this roll.

Example: A police interceptor moving at 600 feet tries to jump across a collapsed bridge. The crew is Skilled (see Table 5-7: Vehicle Crew Quality, below) so the driver gets a +4 to his Drive check. He rolls a 15. According to the Jump rules, the car covers 15 feet. When we divide 600 by 60, we get 10. 15 x 10 = 150 feet. The GM checks the width of the collapsed bridge and finds the interceptor easily makes the jump. The driver wipes the sweat from his forehead and continues his hot pursuit.

Rolling Screen: This stunt allows the driver to substitute Drive checks for Hide checks. The driver moves so that another, larger vehicle is between him and whoever he is hiding from. He paces his vehicle with the concealing vehicle. When trying to resolve whether or not an opponent spots the hiding vehicle, the GM compares the opponent's Spot or Search check with the hiding driver's Drive check. Other crew members may assist with this check. The concealing vehicle may cooperate, and assist, or not, according to the GM.

Check the Axle: Driving under the trailer of a big rig requires a Drive check (DC 20) as part of movement. The GM rules whether your car is low enough to slide beneath (import racers almost always are). Other crew members may assist with this roll. The driver of the big rig may assist, or not, according to the GM.

Avoiding Hazards: Vehicle combat rarely occurs on a perfectly flat, featureless, plain, especially not in *Thunderball Rally!* Rocks, trees, buildings, people, vehicles, wreckage, and other obstacles can get in the way.

When a vehicle tries to move through a square occupied by a hazard, a driver must succeed at a Drive check to avoid the hazard and continue moving. The GM can rule that certain vehicles cannot pass through a square occupied by a large, solid obstacle (like a concrete wall or a building). Attempting to pass through such a square automatically results in a collision, the effects of which should be resolved using the rules for Ramming and Collisions, below.

Unlike other stunts, a driver can make as many Drive checks each round as needed to avoid the obstacles that appear in his path. To determine the DC for the Drive check to avoid a hazard, roll 1d20 and consult Table 5-4: Drive Check to Avoid Hazards. If the Drive check fails, use the Ramming and Collision rules to determine damage.

Table 5-4: Drive Check to Avoid Hazards

D20 Roll	DC to Avoid Hazard
1	40
2	35
3-4	30
5-7	25
8-11	20
12-14	15
15-17	10
18-19	5
20	0

Failing a Drive check to avoid a hazard almost always means that the vehicle has collided with the obstacle. If the hazard is another vehicle, the driver of the second vehicle can also attempt a Drive check to avoid the collision. If both checks fail, the collision occurs. Some hazards require special rules to adjudicate, particularly when failure to avoid the hazard leads to something other than a collision. Regardless of the nature of the hazard, the Drive check determines whether the driver circumvents the hazard successfully. Some specific examples are presented here:

Cliffs and Chasms: Circumventing a cliff or crossing a chasm is tricky; roll 1d12 instead of 1d20 on Table 5-4: Drive Check to Avoid Hazards. A failed Drive check results in a fall that damages both the vehicle and its passengers (See Falling Damage in Chapter 4: Adventures of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Toxic Spills: Determine the DC to avoid the spill normally. A failed check lands the vehicle in a pool of toxic waste. The vehicle itself is unlikely to sustain damage. However, passengers who do not have full cover might suffer adverse effects; refer to the poison rules in Chapter 3: Running the Game of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Failed Stunts

A failed Drive check on a stunt means the driver failed to execute the stunt. If the Drive check fails by 10 or more, the driver might lose control of the vehicle (a driver cannot lose control due to a failed opposed check). The driver must make another Drive check at the same DC as the original (failed) check. If the second check succeeds, the driver maintains control of the vehicle, but still fails to accomplish the desired maneuver. If the second check fails, the driver lost control of her vehicle. Compare the driver's measure of failure (the amount by which she failed the check) to Table 5-5: Loss of Control to determine the effect.

Failed Stunt Effects

Roll: The vehicle rolls in a straight line along its last declared vector for a number of feet determined by its last declared speed category: Alley 1d10, Cruising 1d10x10, Attack 1d10x20, Ramming 1d10x50. A roll deals 1d6 points of damage to the vehicle plus an additional 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet rolled; the vehicle's occupants take 1d4 points of damage per die of damage applied to the vehicle. If the vehicle sustains enough damage, it might explode (see Exploding Vehicles, below). If it does not explode and still has hull points remaining, it stops moving. There is a 50% chance that the car will land right side up. If it does, a successful Drive check to regain control allows the driver to "restart" the vehicle.

If the roll brings the vehicle into contact with another object, see Ramming and Collisions, below.

Skid: The vehicle skids forward along its last declared vector for a number of feet determined by its last declared speed: Alley 2d4, Cruising 2d4x2, Attack 2d4x5, Ramming 2d4x10. Although its facing remains unchanged, the vehicle loses the rest of its movement for the action. If the skid brings the vehicle into contact with another object, see Ramming and Collisions, page 50.

Spin: The vehicle spins wildly and loses the rest of its movement for the action. Roll 1d8 to determine the degree of the turn: 1, no change; 2, right 45 degrees; 3, right 90 degrees; 4, right 135 degrees; 5, left 45 degrees; 6, left 90 degrees; 7, left 135 degrees; 8, 180 degrees. Reorient the vehicle accordingly.

Exploding Vehicles

If a vehicle ever suffers twice as much damage in a single attack as it has remaining hull points, it explodes. This inflicts 10d6 damage to everyone within the vehicle (Reflex save, DC 20, for half damage), and half that much to everyone and everything within 30 feet of the explosion (Reflex save, DC 15, for half damage).

Difficult Conditions

Obstructions, harsh terrain, and poor visibility can hinder a vehicle's speed or a driver's ability to control a vehicle. If any of these factors exist, the vehicle's speed might be reduced and the pilot might suffer a penalty to all Drive checks, as noted in Table 5-6: Conditional Modifiers to Vehicle Movement and Drive Checks.

Vehicle Combat

The GM has two options for determining initiative in vehicle combat. First, the GM

can use individual initiative just as in normal combat, in which each character rolls separately. This is probably the best method if most characters are aboard the same vehicle, but it can result in a lot of delayed or readied actions as gunners wait for drivers to perform maneuvers. An easier way is to roll initiative for each vehicle, using the vehicle's size modifier as the initiative modifier. This is particularly appropriate when characters are in separate vehicles and allows everyone on the same vehicle to act more or less simultaneously.

Table 5-3: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers (page 50) notes bonuses to a vehicle's Defense and penalties (if any) to the crew's attack rolls and skill checks based on the vehicle's speed. You will refer to this table frequently during combat.

Crew Quality

Rather than force a GM to create, or remember, statistics for every racing crew, most vehicle descriptions provide a general "crew quality" descriptor. This indicates the crew's aptitude with vehicle systems, including driving, weapons, and defenses.

Table 5-7: Vehicle Crew Quality lists the five levels of crew quality for GM-controlled vehicle crews, along with the appropriate check modifier. Use the Check Modifier for all skill checks related to the operation of the vehicle (including Drive and Repair checks). Use the Attack Bonus for all attack rolls performed by the crew.

This doesn't restrict GMs from creating unique racing crews. See Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets for examples of pregenerated racer crews.

Table 5-5: Loss of Control (Wheeled Ground Vehicles)

Drive Check Failed By...	Effect	Skill Check Penalty	Vehicle Defense Penalty
Up to 5	Skid	-2	-1
6-10	Skid and Spin	-4	-2
11+	Roll	-8	NA

Vehicle Attack Rolls

There are three kinds of attack rolls involving vehicles: attacking with the vehicle itself, attacking with vehicle-mounted weapons, and attacking with personal weapons while in a vehicle.

Attacking with the Vehicle: Attacking with a vehicle, such as ramming or sideswiping a target, requires an attack roll modified by the driver's base attack bonus, Dexterity modifier, and speed (see Table 5-3: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers).

Attacking with Vehicle-Mounted Weapons: Vehicle mounted weapons are modified by their firing arc (see Facing and Firing Arcs, below). Using vehicle-mounted weapons requires the appropriate exotic weapon or exotic firearm proficiency, or suffers the standard -4 non-proficiency penalty. The person using the weapon makes an attack roll modified by base attack bonus, Dexterity modifier, and speed (see Table 5-3: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers). Firing a ranged weapon from a moving vehicle suffers a -4 penalty unless you have the Vehicle Gunnery skill.

Attacking with Personal Weapons: Using a personal weapon while in a vehicle is a normal attack roll, modified by vehicle speed (see Table 5-3: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers). Firing a ranged weapon from a moving vehicle suffers a -4 penalty unless you have the Vehicle Gunnery skill.

Vehicle Combat Actions

As with personal combat, a character can take both a move action and an attack action in each round of vehicle combat. Instead of taking an attack action, a character can take a second move action.

Driving Defensively: Just as in melee combat, one can "fight defensively" while driving a vehicle, which grants a +2 dodge bonus to the vehicle's Defense and applies a -4 penalty on attack rolls. A driver can also choose "all-out defense," which grants a +4 dodge bonus to Defense but does not allow the driver to attack (gunners suffer a -8 penalty on attack rolls). These modifiers last until the driver's next round of actions.

Making Attack Rolls: Firing a vehicle's weapon requires an attack action and uses the driver's or gunner's base ranged attack value (including Dexterity modifier).

A vehicle operator with 5 or more ranks of Drive gains a +2 synergy bonus when firing vehicle weapons or attacking with the vehicle itself. Some military vehicles possess fire-control computers, and they grant a computer bonus to attack rolls (determined by the computer's quality) with vehicle weapons enhanced by the computer.

Full Attack Actions: A driver can make a full attack only if the vehicle continues along its last vector at its last declared speed. Performing a maneuver or stunt, including changing speed or direction, requires concentration and prevents the driver from taking a full attack action.

Table 5-6: Conditional Modifiers to Vehicle Movement and Drive Checks

	Condition	Example	Movement Multiplier	Drive Check Penalty
Obstruction	Moderate	Undergrowth, city street	x3/4	-2
	Heavy	Thick undergrowth, crowded city street	x1/2	-4
*Terrain**	Difficult	Uneven ground	x3/4	-2
	Poor	Steep slope, mud	x1/2	-4
	Very poor	Deep snow, desert sand	x1/4	-6
Visibility	Poor	Smoke, light fog	NA	-2
	Very poor	Darkness, thick fog	NA	-4

*Tracked ground vehicles cross "Difficult" surfaces without penalty. They treat "Poor" surfaces as "Difficult" and "Very Poor" surfaces as merely "Poor."

Table 5-7: Vehicle Crew Quality

Crew Quality	Check Modifier	Attack Bonus
Untrained	-4	-2
Normal	+2	+0
Skilled*	+4	+2
Expert	+8	+4
Groovy	+12	+8/+3

*Race crews should be skilled at worst, and most should be experts. Leave normal for the bystanders!

Gunners also can take full attack actions. As a rule of thumb, if a weapon is under a character's direct control (such as front-firing weapons or mounted weapons), the character can take a full attack action with that weapon.

Multiple Attacks: A character can make multiple attacks with a single weapon, a group of fire-linked weapons, or a set of adjoining weapons. If two or more identical weapons have identical facings, they are considered adjoining weapons. The gunner of a tank can make one attack with the tank gun and one attack with a machine gun, for example.

Taking a full attack action is only useful if a character can make more than one attack. Characters with a base attack bonus high enough to get multiple attacks (+6 or higher) may take the full attack action to make multiple attacks during vehicle combat. Characters with the Rapid Shot feat can use it to make an extra attack with vehicle weapons.

Ram Attack: A vehicle can, as a full attack, ignore normal defensive maneuvering to ram a target (either a character, creature, obstacle, or another vehicle). The attacking vehicle must move directly toward the target during its action.

The driver must make an attack roll to see whether the target is rammed, ignoring the target's armor bonus to Defense. The ramming vehicle gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll but also suffers a -2 penalty to Defense until the beginning of the driver's next action. A vehicle making a ram attack cannot fight defensively.

If the ram attack succeeds, resolve the damage as a collision (see Ramming and Collisions, below). If the attack fails, the vehicle that attempted the ram continues along the same course a number of squares equal to its unspent movement.

Vehicle Combat Actions

Actions during vehicle combat are handled the same way as actions during personal combat. In general, a character can take two move actions, one move action and one attack action, or one full-round action in a round. Free actions can be performed normally, in conjunction with another action.

Free Actions: Communicating orders and switching weapon fire modes are examples of free actions. Characters can perform as many free actions as the GM permits in 1 round.

Move Actions: The vehicle moves a number of squares as determined by its speed. A move action can be used to propel the vehicle forward or backward, complete simple maneuvers such as turns and slips, or perform a stunt.

Attack Actions: A driver or gunner can make a single attack with one of a vehicle's weapons using her ranged attack bonus. Various modifiers can apply to the attack roll. Note that either a driver or gunner may be able to use a personal weapon as an attack action rather than a vehicle weapon.

Full-Round Actions: A full-round action requires an entire round to complete and cannot be coupled with a move action or attack action. When a driver chooses to make a full-round action, the vehicle continues along its last vector at its last declared speed. Each crewmember can perform one full-round action in one round, including a full attack.

The Fine Art of Stopping a Car

Stopping a car when you're not in it is a major concern for most law-enforcement agencies, and may become a concern for characters in *Thunderball Rally*. Here are a few rules to help you out.

Shoot the Tires: Most people don't know that it's possible to drive on a flat tire. The repair bill that follows will be astronomical, but it is possible. Treat tires as Defense 26 (+16 size) for rolling to hit, and DR 3 for damage. They have 7 hit points. Each flat tire on a wheeled vehicle imposes a -4 penalty on Drive checks.

Caltrops: See Vehicle Accessories (page 52).

Barriers: Most barriers use the collision rules to determine whether they break, allowing the vehicle to pass, or remain intact and stop the vehicle. Many law-enforcement agencies are experimenting with lightweight, portable barriers that expand to cover an area up to 30-feet across. These portable barriers have metal spikes sticking straight up from them, and they use the caltrop rules (page 52) with the exception that each spike does 2 points of damage rather than 1. This means that the barrier destroys a tire on a roll of 5 or greater.

Ramming and Collisions

Collisions occur when a vehicle loses control and strikes a solid object or when a driver decides to ram her vehicle into something on purpose.

Resolving Ram Attacks: When a driver chooses to use her vehicle as a weapon by ramming another vehicle, a character, a creature, or an object, follow this procedure:

1. *Declare the vehicle's speed category* (alley, cruising, attack, ramming, supersonic). The speed must be sufficient to carry it to the target, or the ram attempt fails automatically.

2. *Move the vehicle straight toward the target.* The movement must be in a straight line (no backing up allowed). Until the next round, the vehicle suffers a -2 penalty to Defense. The vehicle can pass through obstacles if the driver succeeds at the appropriate Drive checks (see Table 5-4: Drive Check to Avoid Hazards).

3. *When the ramming vehicle enters the square occupied by its target, resolve the ram attack.* The forward momentum gives a +2 circumstance bonus to the driver's attack roll, and the target's armor bonus to Defense (if any) does not apply. A vehicle can only attempt to ram a single target once during a round.

4. *If the attack succeeds, a collision occurs* (see below). If the attack fails, the vehicle continues along the same course, using up any unspent movement from its declared speed.

Resolving Collisions: Vehicle collisions depend on the speed and size of the objects involved. Use the highest speed of the two colliding objects (at the moment of impact) to determine the damage die type.

Determine the number of dice to roll using Table 5-9: Collision Damage by Size, and the smallest object involved (note that this table uses the same size scale as Table 5-2: Vehicle Sizes).

Finally, decide the collision's damage multiplier based on the movement vectors of the ramming vehicle and the target.

Once the damage has been determined, apply it to both vehicles (or objects) involved in the collision. If a vehicle sustains enough damage, it might explode (see Exploding Vehicles, page 48).

Table 5-8: Collision Damage by Speed

Highest Speed	Damage Die Type
Alley	d4
Cruising	d8
Attack	d10
Ramming	d12

Table 5-9: Collision Damage by Size

Vehicle Size	# of Dice
Colossal	8
Gargantuan	6
Huge	4
Large	2
Medium	1
Small and smaller	0

Table 5-10: Collision Vector Multipliers

Target is	Multiplier
Moving toward the ramming vehicle	x2
Moving perpendicular to the ramming vehicle	x1
Moving away from the ramming vehicle	x1/2

Sideswipes

During a vehicle's movement action, a driver can attempt to sideswipe a vehicle or other target, either to deal damage without fully ramming it or to cause another driver to lose control of his vehicle.

A sideswipe requires enough movement to pass through the target to perform the stunt. The size and speed of the target determines the DC of the Drive check. See Table 5-11: Drive Checks to Sideswipe Targets to determine the DC for the stunt. If the stunt is successful, the damage dealt to both the sideswiping vehicle and the target is one-quarter the damage of a successful ramming attack (use the Ramming and Collisions sidebar and divide the final damage result by 4, rounding down).

If the stunt succeeds and the target is another moving vehicle, the driver of the sideswiped vehicle must succeed at a Drive check (DC 10) at the beginning of his next action or lose control of the vehicle; a failed check is treated like a failed stunt (see Failed Stunts, below).

If the sideswipe stunt fails, the driver of the attacking vehicle must make a second Drive check to avoid ramming the target as he passes through the target's square, as if avoiding a hazard (see Avoiding Hazards, above).

Pursuit

Sometimes a driver wants to get behind an opponent and follow his every move, whether to draft behind a much larger vehicle or to take advantage of a "blind spot." To establish pursuit, a vehicle must be within Point Blank range (10 feet or closer) and in the target vehicle's rear arc. Drivers make an opposed Drive check. The target gains a +5 circumstance bonus to his check unless he's completely unaware of the pursuer. If the pursuer's Drive check result is higher, she successfully establishes pursuit.

Pursuing: Once a driver has established pursuit, she becomes the target's shadow: She acts on the same initiative, moves at the same declared speed (if possible) and must do everything the target does to maintain pursuit. A pursuing vehicles moves at the same time as its target through exactly the same squares the target moves through—even squares including obstacles, if need be—and must perform all the same stunts and Drive checks to avoid hazards. If a pursuer fails to execute the maneuvers taken by the target, the pursuit ends (even if the pursuer does not suffer any damage as a result of a failed check).

Attack as a Free Action: After the target declares his speed for the round (which also determines the pursuer's speed for the round), the driver of the pursuing vehicle can make a single attack with one forward-firing weapon. All gunners with forward-firing weapons can act as normal. While pursuing a vehicle, a driver or gunner ignores all speed modifiers to the pursued vehicle's Defense.

Flanking: Similar to flanking in personal combat, two or more vehicles can "bracket" an enemy vehicle and thus increase their chances of successfully hitting it with an attack. Two or more vehicles that have established pursuit on the same target gain a +2 circumstance bonus on attacks versus the pursued vehicle.

Breaking Off Pursuit: A pursuer can break off pursuit at any time by choosing a different course than his target.

Breaking off pursuit is a special delaying action. When the pursuer decides to break off pursuit the pursuer's initiative automatically drops by one; she no longer acts at the same time as her erstwhile target.

Escape Pursuit: To escape a pursuer, the driver of the pursued vehicle must make an opposed Drive check. The pursuer gains a +5 circumstance bonus to the check. If the pursued driver wins, he breaks the pursuit, and the pursuer no longer ignores the speed modifiers of the pursued ship's Defense. Whenever a vehicle escapes pursuit, its pursuer's initiative drops by one; it no longer acts at the same time as its erstwhile target.

Facing and Firing Arcs

All standard-mounted weapons point in one of four directions: forward, aft (rear), right, or left. Some weapons are turret-mounted (allowing them to fire in all four directions). A weapon's facing and arc of fire is listed in the vehicle's description.

Often, the part of the vehicle that includes a given fire arc is two or more squares wide. If it becomes important (such as for determining range, or for firing at point-blank range), count the number of weapons included in that fire arc, and divide by the number of squares the vehicle has in that fire arc. That will determine, in most cases, exactly how many weapons are actually in a given square on a vehicle, and thus how much of the vehicle's firing actually comes from that square.

Critical Hits to Vehicles

Critical hits in vehicle combat function similarly to critical hits in personal combat, but instead of dealing additional damage, a critical hit with a vehicle weapon bypasses a target' damage reduction, dealing damage directly to its hull.

Critical hits represent extraordinarily lucky shots that manage to find weak points in a vehicle's armor. Most vehicle weapons have a threat range of 20; they still need to make a second attack roll to confirm any attack that is a threat.

Shoving

To shove another car, a driver must successfully sideswipe it. The attacker and the defender make opposed Drive checks. You each add a +4 bonus for each size category you are above Medium-size or a -4 penalty for each size category you are below Medium-size. The faster car gets a +2 bonus for each speed category above the slower car. If the attacker beats the defender, he pushes the defender 5 feet along the attacker's last vector. If the attacker moves with the defender, the attacker can push him up to a distance of an additional 1 foot for each point by which the attacker exceeded the defender's check result. The attacker cannot exceed his normal movement limit. If the attacker failed to beat the defender's Drive check, neither vehicle moves.

Using Cover

When you open fire with a vehicle's weapons, objects or vehicles in the way can provide cover for your target. Cover provides a bonus to a target's Defense. The more cover, the greater the bonus.

When you declare an attack, draw an imaginary line from the center of the square from which you're firing (see Facing and Firing Arcs, above) to the center of the square that includes the target. When your target occupies more than one square, you must declare which square you're firing at. Each square that includes an object—whether a vehicle, character, creature, obstacle—provides some degree of cover for your target, making the shot more difficult. Table 5-12: Vehicle Cover lists the Defense bonuses by different sizes of objects. When multiple obstacles occupy the same square, apply their cumulative cover bonus.

When firing at a target occupying the same square as an obstacle, the cover bonus for the obstacle applies. Obstacles in the same square as the attacking vehicle do not provide cover to the target.

Striking the Cover: An attack that misses a target with cover might inadvertently strike the cover instead. This occurs when the attack roll would have hit the target had it not had cover, and the attack roll is high enough to hit the cover's Defense. To determine which covering object was struck, start with the object closest to the target vessel, and compare the attack roll to its Defense. If the roll is sufficient to hit, apply the damage to the cover. If not, move outward to the next distant covering object, and repeat this process until either a piece of cover is struck or all the cover has been missed. If the covering object is a vehicle, and the driver of the vehicle is using a dodge ability that keeps the covering vehicle from being struck, the original target is truck after all. Effectively, the covering vehicle has dodged out of the way, saving itself instead of providing cover.

Fire-linked Weapons

Vehicles sometimes have fire-linked weapons that point and fire in the same direction. Fire-linked weapons are treated as a single weapon (fired with a single attack roll and all at the same target) that deals greater damage than either weapon alone. Each doubling of the number of fire-linked weapons (two, four, eight, and so on) adds one die of damage (before multiplication). This allows the firing of multiple weapons for some additional effect while only requiring a single attack action.

Only identical weapons can be fire-linked.

Damage

All vehicles have hull points, which are roughly equivalent to a character's hit points. Most vehicles also have a damage reduction (DR) rating. Whenever a vehicle takes damage, subtract the vehicle's DR from the damage dealt. This reflects the fact that even the best pistol shot simply can't deal enough damage to the hull of an armored truck.

When a vehicle is reduced to 0 hull points, it is disabled. If a vehicle ever suffers twice as much damage in a single attack as it has remaining hull points, it explodes (see Exploding Vehicles, above). If the vehicle explodes

Table 5-11: Drive Checks to Sideswipe Targets

Target Size	Base DC	Speed of Target	DC Modifier
Colossal	0	Stationary	-10
Gargantuan	5	Alley	-5
Huge	10	Cruising	+0
Large	15	Attack	+5
Medium-size	20	Ramming	+10
Small	25		
Tiny	30		
Diminutive	35		
Fine	40		

when ramming or colliding with another vehicle, the other vehicle suffers the same damage.

Developing Flaws: After losing 50% or more of its hull points in a battle, a vehicle might pick up a flaw. When the vehicle is repaired, roll on Table 5-1: Used Vehicle Flaws to see whether a flaw has developed. The flaw might not be apparent immediately, remaining hidden until the affected system is used (or takes damage, in the case of hull points).

Repairing Damage: Damage to a vehicle's hull must be repaired manually (by welding hull patches onto the vehicle). A full hour of work is required to repair lost hull points. The result of the Repair check equals the number of hull points repaired.

A vehicle that suffers more damage than twice its hull points cannot be repaired.

Table 5-12: Vehicle Cover

Cover Size	Defense Bonus
Colossal	+12
Gargantuan	+8
Huge	+4
Large	+2
Small/Medium-size	+1
Fine/Diminutive/Tiny	+0

Vehicle Descriptions

This section describes a variety of common vehicles you might want to have available in your *Thunderball Rally* campaign. The complete D20 Modern includes several additional vehicles.

Terminology

The vehicle descriptions in this section use the following terminology.

Class: The vehicle type: Flying, Hover, Tracked (Ground), Water (Surface), or Wheeled (Ground).

Size: The vehicle's size category.

Passengers: The number of passengers and/or troops that the vehicle can carry (in addition to the crew listing, below). Each passenger space can be converted to 2 cargo units (see Vehicle Accessories).

Cargo Capacity: The amount of cargo units the vehicle can carry. A cargo unit is approximately equal to 5 cubic feet. Note that open trucks (such as pick-up trucks) show cargo units based on the dimensions of the cargo bed. It's also worth noting that the listed cargo capacity assumes the standard seating (passengers and crew as listed), and you can convert a seat to 2 cargo units (see Accessories).

Speed: The number of feet the vehicle can cover in a move action. If the vehicle uses two move actions, it can move twice this far in a round. A vehicle can also use all-out movement (a full-round action) and move four times its listed speed.

Maximum Speed: The vehicle's maximum overland speed in miles per hour.

Cost: The vehicle's price in U.S. dollars.

Crew: The minimum number of crew needed to operate the vehicle. The quality of the crew and the modifier to appropriate skill checks (see Vehicle Crew Quality, page 49) follow in parentheses.

Initiative: The modifier added to initiative rolls for this vehicle and crew.

Maneuver: The modifier added to any Drive checks attempted by this crew and vehicle.

Defense: The vehicle's Defense includes the vehicle's size modifier.

Hull Points: The vehicle's maximum hull points.

DR: Damage Reduction. Subtract this number from any damage dealt to the vehicle's hull. If it reduces the damage to 0 or less, no damage is dealt by the attack.

Victory Roll Modifier: This modifier applies to the team's Victory Roll (see Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets).

Economy Cars

This category covers cars like the AMC Gremlin and Volkswagen Beetle. Typically, they have lap seat belts and AM radios. They are two squares wide and three squares long.

Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +7 (+4 size, +1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 4
Maneuver: +5 (+4 size, -1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 3
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 220 feet
Maximum Speed: 100 mph
Hull Points: 20
DR: 7
Cost: $15,000
Victory Roll Modifier: -1
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passenger.

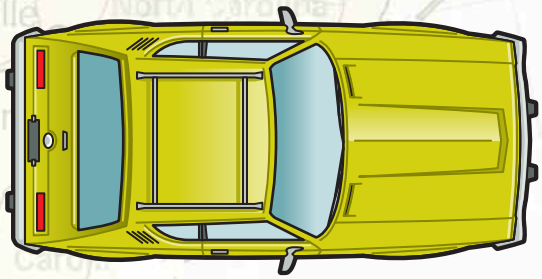
Luxury Cars

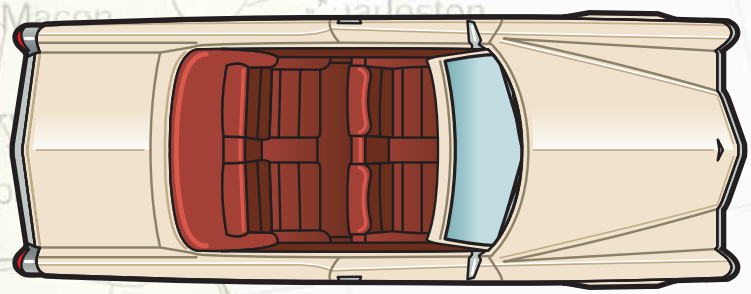
This category covers Cadillacs and top-of-the-line sedans from most major manufacturers. Typically, they have lap seat belts, and AM/FM radios with both front and rear speakers. Some have 8-track tape players. They are two squares wide and four squares long.

Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +7 (+4 size, +1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 4
Maneuver: +7 (+4 size, +1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 4
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 265 feet
Maximum Speed: 120 mph
Hull Points: 35
DR: 7
Cost: $40,000
Victory Roll Modifier: +0
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers

Mid-Size Cars

This category covers mid-sized "family" sedans. Typically, they have AM/FM radios with front speakers.





They are two squares wide and four squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +6 (+4 size, +0 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 5
Maneuver: +5 (+4 size, -1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 4
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 235 feet
Maximum Speed: 109 mph
Hull Points: 25
DR: 7
Cost: $20,000
Victory Roll Modifier: +0
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers.

Motorcycles

Mounting and starting a motorcycle is a free action, rather than two move-equivalent actions. We cover two types, the racing motorcycle and the touring motorcycle. Both are one square wide and two squares long. Weapons mounted on motorcycles fire into either the front or rear arcs, but not the sides.

Racer

Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Large
Initiative: +14 (+8 size, +4 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 0
Maneuver: +11 (+8 size, +1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 1
Defense: 18*(+8 size)
Speed: 460 feet
Maximum Speed: 210 mph
Hull Points: 3
DR: 3
Cost: $17,000
Victory Roll Modifier: +2
*Provides no cover for crew and passengers

Touring

Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Large
Initiative: +13 (+8 size, +3 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 1
Maneuver: +11 (+8 size, +1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 2
Defense: 18*(+8 size)
Speed: 330 feet
Maximum Speed: 150 mph
Hull Points: 5
DR: 3
Cost: $18,000
Victory Roll Modifier: +1
*Provides no cover for crew and passengers

Other Vehicles

Armored Truck

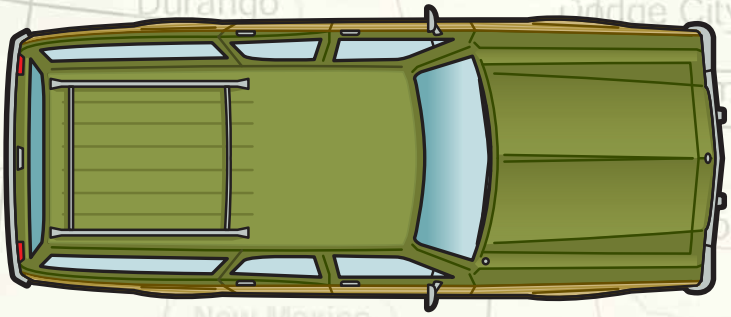
Used to transport money between businesses and financial institutions, armored trucks often make people nervous. After all, you never know when someone will try to rob one. Armored trucks generally have 3 doors. Standard features include air conditioning, power steering, AM/FM radio, and automatic transmission. Most armored trucks have radio transceivers to communicate with their home office. Some armored transport companies also issue walkie-talkies to their truck crews. Most armored trucks have firing ports that allow the crew to use their firearms without leaving the vehicle. The armored truck is two squares wide and four squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Skilled +4 (1 driver, 1 assistant)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +5 (+4 size, -3 vehicle, +4 crew)
Passengers: 0
Maneuver: +5 (+4 size, -3 vehicle, +4 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 34
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 215 feet
Maximum Speed: 98 mph
Hull Points: 40
DR: 14
Cost: $100,000
Victory Roll Modifier: -1
*Provides 9-tenths cover for crew and passengers

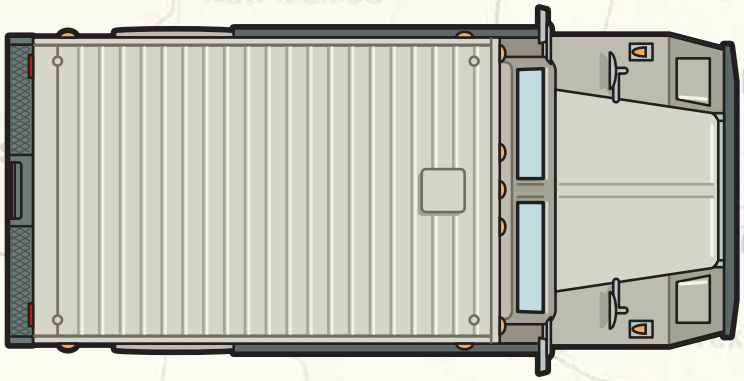
Limousine

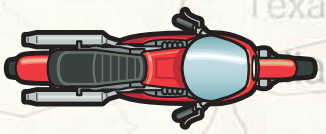
A limousine is a big, comfortable car. The statistics here are for a moderate sized vehicle, rather than a super-stretch or a conventional car with a professional driver. Other standard features include air conditioning, rear defogger, power locks, power mirrors, power steering, power windows, AM/FM radio, 8-track, power driver seat, tilt steering, and automatic transmission. Most limousines contain a radio transceiver for the driver. The limousine is two squares wide and five squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Skilled +4 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +7 (+4 size, -1 vehicle, +4 crew)
Passengers: 7
Maneuver: +6 (+4 size, -2 vehicle, +4 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 4
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 240 feet
Maximum Speed: 110 mph
Hull Points: 35
DR: 7**
Cost: $175,000
Victory Roll Modifier: +0
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers
**VIP limousines used to transport diplomats, ambassadors, and presidents, will have DR 14 or higher.

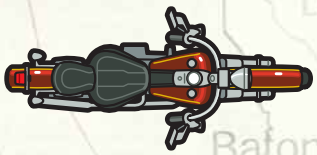
Moving Truck

This is a large, two-axle truck used to move furniture









and similar large objects, generally within one city. They are often available through rental agencies such as Ryder and U-Haul. Rented trucks generally have air-conditioning, automatic transmissions, and AM radios. Commercial trucks may or may not have air-conditioning, and generally have CB radio transceivers to communicate with their home office. A moving truck is two squares wide and five squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +4 (+4 size, -2 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 2
Maneuver: +3 (+4 size, -3 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 310
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 210 feet
Maximum Speed: 95 mph
Hull Points: 35
DR: 7
Cost: $95,000 (but you can rent them for as little as $19.95/day)
Victory Roll Modifier: -1
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers

Performance Cars

This category includes American muscle cars like the 1969 Dodge Charger R/T (the *General Lee*, from *The Dukes of Hazzard*), the Ford Mustang, and the Chevrolet Camaro; and smaller racing vehicles from overseas like the Aston-Martin DB5, and anything made by Porsche or Ferrari. Typically they have the latest quadraphonic stereo sound, AM/FM radios with 8-track tape players, and three-point seatbelts.

Muscle Car

This car is two squares wide and four squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +9 (+4 size, +3 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 1
Maneuver: +7 (+4 size, +1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 3
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 430 feet
Maximum Speed: 195 mph
Hull Points: 30
DR: 7
Cost: $16,000
Victory Roll Modifier: +2
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers

Import Racer

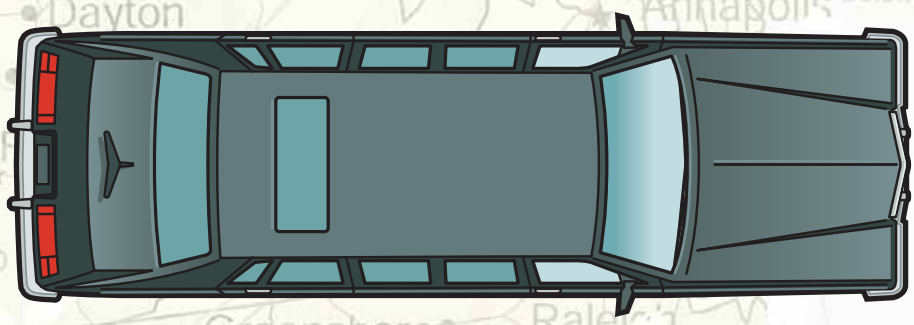
This car is two squares wide and three squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Large
Initiative: +13 (+8 size, +3 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 1
Maneuver: +11 (+8 size, +1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 2
Defense: 18*(+8 size)
Speed: 355 feet
Maximum Speed: 160 mph
Hull Points: 30
DR: 7
Cost: $17,000
Victory Roll Modifier: +2
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers

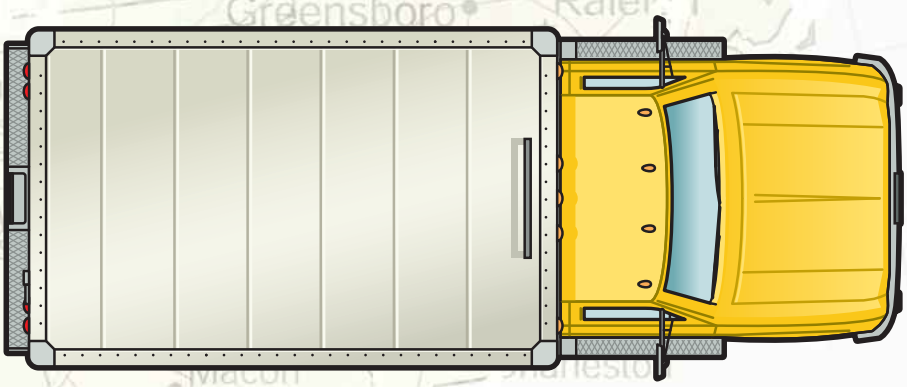
Pick-up Trucks

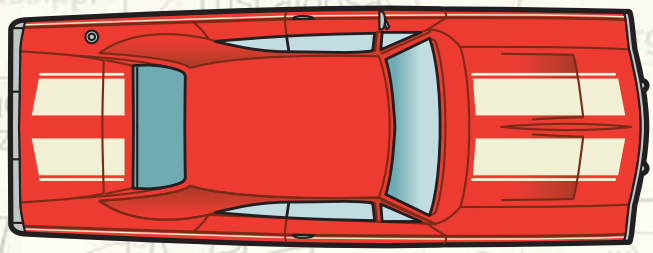
These are big, muscular trucks modified for various purposes including work as tow trucks. They generally have bench seats, manual transmissions, AM radios, and many have CB radio transceivers. They are two squares wide and four squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +6 (+4 size, +0 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 2
Maneuver: +5 (+4 size, -1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 24
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 220 feet
Maximum Speed: 100 mph
Hull Points: 30
DR: 7
Cost: $21,000
Victory Roll Modifier: -1
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers

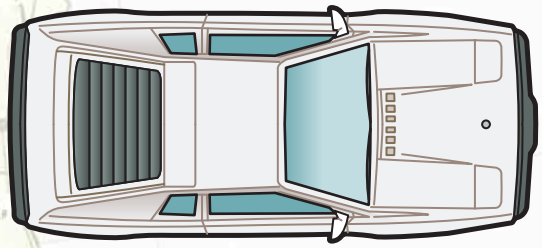
Vans

Typical delivery vans have plenty of cargo room and the added bonus of being inconspicuous. They are two squares wide and four squares long.









Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Normal +2 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +5 (+4 size, -1 vehicle, +2 crew)
Passengers: 1
Maneuver: +3 (+4 size, -3 vehicle, +2 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 34
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 215 feet
Maximum Speed: 98 mph
Hull Points: 30
DR: 7
Cost: $21,000
Victory Roll Modifier: -1
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and full cover for passengers

Vehicles Not on the Open Market

Police Vehicles

Local police forces use modified versions of commercially available vehicles. Depending on the location, the size of the force, and their mission, police forces may use modified mid-size cars, performance cars, or pickup trucks.

Cruisers

This vehicle is based on mid-size sedan. Standard features for a police cruiser include police-band radio, spotlight, bubble lights, and brush guard. Though there is room in the front seat for two officers and the shotgun rack. A metal cage separates front and rear seats. "Low profile" cruisers lack the bubble lights, and "undercover" cruisers lack the identifying logos and colors as well. A cruiser is two squares wide and four squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Skilled +4 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +9 (+4 size, +1 vehicle, +4 crew)
Passengers: 4
Maneuver: +8 (+4 size, +0 vehicle, +4 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 5
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 290 feet
Maximum Speed: 130 mph
Hull Points: 30
DR: 7
Cost: Unavailable for purchase
Victory Roll Modifier: +0
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers

Interceptors

This vehicle is based on an American muscle car. With faster and faster sports cars on the streets, the police occasionally need faster cars to catch them. Most major cities only operate interceptors on special occasions, and other police departments only rent them. They share the same standard features as cruisers, but generally lack the rear seat space to carry prisoners. An interceptor is two squares wide and four squares long.
Class: Wheeled (Ground)
Crew: Skilled +4 (1 driver)
Size: Huge
Initiative: +12 (+4 size, +2 vehicle, +4 crew)
Passengers: 3
Maneuver: +9 (+4 size, +1 vehicle, +4 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 3
Defense: 14*(+4 size)
Speed: 370 feet
Maximum Speed: 170 mph
Hull Points: 25
DR: 7
Cost: Unavailable for purchase
Victory Roll Modifier: +2
*Provides three-quarter cover for crew and passengers

Converting More Vehicles

We arrived at our numbers using a variety of web sites, such as www.autosite.com. Magazines such as *Car and Driver* and *Road & Track* often contain the information you need to convert real-world vehicles to the d20 System.

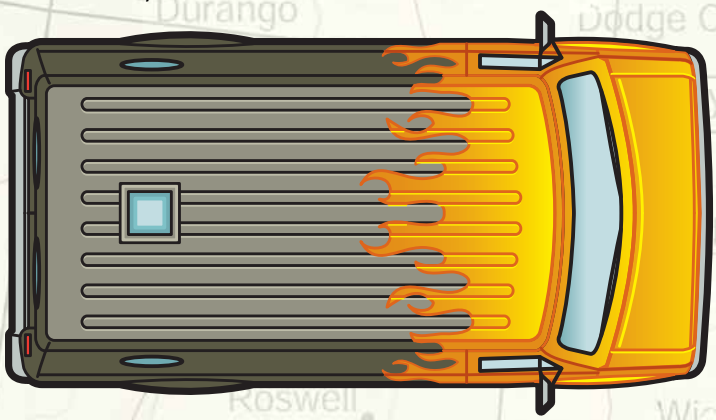
Most of the numbers we use are real-world numbers. Some statistics only exist in the game world, however. Here are guidelines for deriving them:

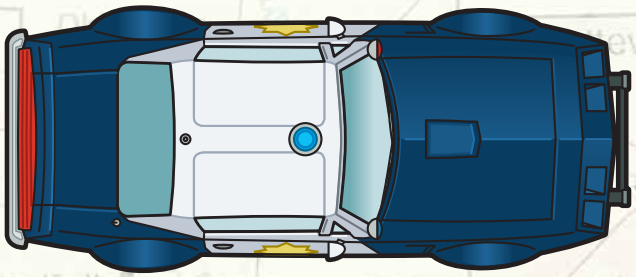
Size: Table 5-2: Vehicle Sizes shows how to derive a size category. Vehicles up to 5 feet wide are one square wide. Vehicles 6-10 feet wide are two squares wide, and so on. Once you have a vehicle's width in feet, divide by 5 and round any fraction up. That gives you the width in squares. Similarly, divide the vehicle's length in feet by 5 and round any fraction up. That gives you the length in squares.

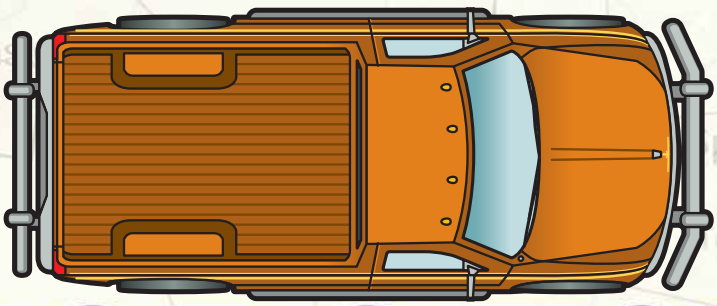
Initiative: We used vehicles' 0-60 MPH performance to set this as follows.

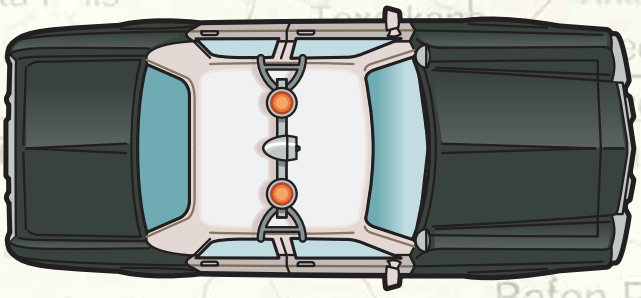
Less than 4 seconds	+4
4-5 seconds	+3
5.1-7 seconds	+2
7.1-9 seconds	+1
9.1-11 seconds	+0
11.1-14 seconds	-1
14.1+ seconds	-2

Maneuver: We used vehi-









cles' slalom speeds to set their maneuver rating.

Less than 40 MPH	-2
41-50 MPH	-1
51-60 MPH	+0
61-70 MPH	+1
71-80 MPH	+2

Defense: We chose an armor bonus of 7 for all vehicles unless there was some reason for them to be heavily armored. This is roughly the equivalent of wearing half-plate armor.

Speed: Take the maximum speed in miles per hour and divide by 600 to get miles per round (divide by 60 to get rounds per minute, then divide again by 10 to get miles per 6-seconds, which is the length of a round). Then multiply by 1,320 to get feet per movement action (multiply by 5,280 to convert miles to feet, then divide by 4 since moving at maximum speed requires a full-move action that is 4 times base speed). Round to the nearest 5, since the standard grid uses 5-foot squares.

DR: We assigned a rating of 7 to all civilian and civilian-based vehicles because they should be able to withstand the average damage from a pistol.

Hull Points: We based this on vehicles' weight as follows:

2001 lb - 2500 lb	15
2501 lb - 3000 lb	20
3001 lb - 3500 lb	25
3501 lb - 4000 lb	30
4001 lb - 4500 lb	35
4501 lb - 5000 lb	40
5001 lb - 5500 lb	45
5501 lb - 6000 lb	50
6501 lb - 7000 lb	55

For motorcycles, we divided 2001 pounds by the motorcycle's weight, and then divided 15 hull points by the result of that division.

Victory Roll Modifiers: This is based on maximum speed.

0-99 MPH	-1
100-139 MPH	+0
140-159 MPH	+1
160+ MPH	+2

Vehicle Accessories

Vehicle accessories fall into three general categories. First is offensive weapons, such as rockets and machine-guns, second is defensive equipment such as caltrops and oil sprayers, and third is mechanical equipment like spare fuel tanks and turbochargers. All accessories, regardless of category, have a cost and a size, rated in cargo units.

Cargo Units

A cargo unit is roughly 5 cubic feet. Every vehicle has a cargo rating, generally based on its trunk space. While not all these items actually fit in the trunk, building them into the vehicle requires some standard vehicle equipment to shift around. For instance, forward-firing machine guns require some items normally under the hood to shift to the trunk space.

You cannot exceed the cargo rating when adding equipment to your vehicle.

Trading Seats

A seat is approximately 2 cargo units. You may remove a seat and replace it with one or more pieces of equipment. Such equipment is immediately obvious to anyone looking in the car window, so it adds +1 to your GM's roll to see if you attract unwanted attention (see Unwanted Attention in Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets).

Concealment

Most equipment is concealed except when in use. Exceptions appear in individual descriptions (and see Trading Seats, above). Unconcealed equipment is a +1 to your GM's roll to see if you attract unwanted attention (see Unwanted Attention in Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets).

Turret-mounted weapons are never concealed. Turrets add a +4 to your GM's roll to see if you attract unwanted attention.

Installation

Racers install accessories themselves. Doing so requires the appropriate tools and a suitable garage. A decent, complete set of tools costs $500. Spending $1,000 on tools buys a deluxe set that grants a +2 equipment bonus to Repair checks using them. A garage space costs $1,000. Spending $5,000 on garage space grants a +2 bonus on Repair checks using that garage. Garage space isn't portable, but tools are. A standard set of tools uses no appreciable cargo space in the vehicle. The deluxe set requires 1 cargo unit to transport.

To install an item after purchasing it, make a Repair check (DC 20). Base installation time is 12 hours. You may not take 20 on these checks, but you may take 10. Succeeding by 5 or more on your Repair check cuts the time in half. Failing by 5 or more damages the vehicle and the item, forcing Repair checks to fix them before starting the installation from scratch.

Offensive Weapons

Vehicles pack much heavier weapons than the firearms described elsewhere in this book, but they follow similar rules. Refer to Table 5-13: Offensive Weapons for more details.

Weapon Descriptions

Auto Cannon: Originally mounted on aircraft, these extra-large machine guns fire cartridges over half an inch in diameter. Auto cannons are mounted firing front or rear, but not to the sides. They may be turret-mounted. Multiple auto cannons can be fire-linked.

Extra Ammo: You may purchase extra auto cannon and machine gun ammunition. Another magazine costs half as much as the weapon, and takes up half as much cargo space. For instance, purchasing another 900 cartridges of auto cannon ammunition costs $2,500, and takes 2 cargo units in addition to the 4 already used by the weapon and the first magazine. Using the additional ammunition requires no special action or roll. You just have more.

Hub Blades: These razor sharp blades spring from the axles of your car. When you sideswipe a vehicle, these blades deal damage directly to the vehicle's tires (see The Fine Art of Stopping a Vehicle, above). If you sideswipe a pedestrian, the blades deal damage to the pedestrian. Price and cargo units are for a set of 2 blades. You may mount both blades on one side of your vehicle, or you may mount both in the front or rear axle.

Machine Gun: These come in two sizes, a .50 caliber heavy machine gun and a 7.62mm medium machine gun. Heavy machine guns may be mounted firing front or rear, but not to the sides. Medium machine guns may be mounted in any firing arc. All machine guns may be turret-mounted. Multiple machine guns may be fire-linked.

Table 5-13: Offensive Weapons

Name	Caliber	Magazine	Range	Dam.	Crit.	ROF	Cargo	Cost
Auto cannon	20mm	900	120	3d10	20	A	4	$5,000
Hub Blades	NA	NA	none	2d6	20	NA	0	$1,000
Machine gun	.50	1000	90	2d10	19-20	A	2	$2,000
Machine gun	7.62mm	2000	90	2d8	20	A	1	$1,000
Ram Horns	NA	NA	none	NA	NA	NA	2	$500
Rocket	70mm	1	50	6d6	20	1	2	$2,000

Ram Horns: Ram horns are extensions of your front bumper designed to protect your vehicle when ramming another. Ram horns grant your vehicle an additional 5 points of damage resistance, but only when resolving damage from purposely ramming another vehicle. Ram horns are never concealed, but since many former police vehicles, sold at auction, come equipped with them, they have no affect on attracting unwanted attention.

Rocket: This is an unguided rocket with a high-explosive warhead. When fired, the rocket travels 100 feet in a straight line from the firing vehicle. On subsequent rounds it travels 200 feet until it reaches its maximum range. If it hits a person, vehicle, or building, it explodes. The explosion has a radius of 15 feet and a Reflex save for half damage (DC 20). Rockets may be mounted firing in any arc, or may be turret-mounted. Multiple rockets may be fire-linked.

Defensive Equipment

Sometimes it's better to beat your enemies by defending yourself. Refer to Table 5-14: Defensive Equipment for more information.

Defense Descriptions

Caltrops: This device contains enough caltrops to fill an area ten feet wide and twenty feet long. You may double the length by spending half the original price. The additional caltrops require half the original cargo units. Caltrops are always mounted in the rear arc.

If a wheeled vehicle crosses a square that contains caltrops, it does not stop. There is no chance for the driver to avoid the caltrops by moving slowly. Assume that a 5-foot square area of caltrops only affects the tires on the side of the vehicle passing through it. The DM rolls 1d10 to determine how many caltrops the tire hits. The first three caltrops reduce the DR of the tire. All caltrops after that damage the tire's hit points, so a result of 10 on the 1d10 roll automatically destroys the tire. Each flat tire on a wheeled vehicle imposes a -4 penalty on Drive checks.

Extra Armor: Racers may add additional armor to their vehicle, increasing its DR. Price is for +2 DR. Racers may add as much armor as they can afford both in terms of money and of cargo space. Each +2 DR is a -1 to the Victory Roll (See Victory Roll in Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets).

Oil Sprayers: This device sprays a slick coating of oil on the road. It fills an area ten feet wide and twenty feet long. You may double the length by spending half the original price. The additional oil requires half the original cargo units. Oil sprayers are always mounted in the rear arc.

If a wheeled vehicle enters an oil slick area, all Drive checks for the next 4 rounds are at -4. Oil slicks are flammable. If ignited, they function as smoke screens rather than oil slicks.

Smokescreens: This device sprays a cloud of smoke, filling an area 10 feet wide, 10 feet high, and 20 feet long each round it operates. The basic device can operate for four rounds before needing a refill. Refills cost half as much as the original price. Additional fuel costs the same as a refill. Each addition doubles the operating time and takes up half as many cargo units as the original device. A smoke cloud provides 100 percent concealment. Smoke clouds remain at full strength for 2 rounds, and then provide 50% concealment for another 2 rounds. Strong winds halve those times. Smokescreens are always mounted in the rear arc.

Mechanical Equipment

The key to success doesn't always come from extra armor or ammunition. Sometimes, it's the little mechanical masterpieces under the hood. Refer to Table 5-15: Mechanical Equipment for more details.

Mechanical Descriptions

Extra Fuel Tanks: Extra Fuel tanks allow racers to drive further without refueling. They provide a +1 bonus to the Victory Roll (see Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets). Extra fuel tanks are always concealed, unless they replace a vehicle's seats.

NOS: A nitrous oxide system doubles the damage caused when the vehicle mounting NOS explodes. Nitrous oxide provides a tremendous performance boost to an engine. It adds 440 feet (about 200 MPH) to the vehicle's speed while operating, but the boost only lasts 2 rounds. Activating NOS is a free action. While operating, NOS provides a -4 penalty to the vehicle's maneuver rating. Operating a NOS unit for more than 2 rounds burns out the engine, causing a -4 penalty to attempts to establish pursuit until it is repaired. Burning out an engine causes a -1 penalty to the Victory Roll (see Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets). NOS is concealed except when in use or when mounted on a motorcycle.

Sidecar: A sidecar mounts on the right side of a motorcycle. It requires no particular cargo space, and provides 3 cargo units or a passenger seat and 1 cargo unit. Weapons mounted in the

Table 5-14: Defensive Equipment

Item	Cargo	Cost
Caltrops	2	$1,000
Extra caltrops	1	$500
Oil sprayers	2	$2,000
Extra fuel	1	$1,000
Smokescreens	2	$2,000
Extra fuel	1	$1,000
Extra Armor	1	$1,000

Table 5-15: Mechanical Equipment

Item	Cargo	Cost
Extra Fuel Tank	2	$1,000
NOS	4	$5,000
Additional NO2	2	$2,500
Sidecar	0	$500
Spinning Plates	0	$1,000
Turbo I	1	$5,000
Turbo II	2	$7,500
Turret	4	$10,000

sidecar can only fire in either the front or rear arcs. A sidecar reduces a motorcycle or motorcycle driver's initiative bonus by -1, and reduces speed 50 feet (about 25 MPH).

Spinning Plates: This allows a driver to change license plates without leaving the driver's seat. Activating spinning plates is a free action. Spinning plates provide a -4 penalty to the GM's Fuzz Check (see The Fuzz in Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets). Spinning plates are always concealed except when activated.

Turbo I: A turbo supercharger activates automatically when a driver places sudden, extreme demand on an engine. A turbine driven by engine exhaust drives a supercharger that forces air into the engine to increase power. Turbo I increases vehicle speed 100 feet (about 50 MPH), but increases the DC for all Repair checks to the engine by +5. While operating, turbo I provides a -2 penalty to the vehicle's maneuver rating. Operating a turbo system for more than 5 rounds burns out the engine, causing a -4 penalty to attempts to establish pursuit until it is repaired. Burning out an engine causes a -1 penalty to the Victory Roll. Otherwise, turbo I provides a +1 bonus to the Victory Roll (see Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets). Turbo I is concealed except when operating.

Turbo II: Where turbo I uses subtle vents to bring air to the supercharger, turbo II requires a hole in the hood through which a large "blower" protrudes. Turbo II increases vehicle speed 220 feet (about 100 MPH), but increases the DC for all Repair checks to the engine by +5. While operating, turbo II provides a -4 penalty to the vehicle's maneuver rating. Operating a turbo system for more than 5 rounds burns out the engine, causing a -4 penalty to attempts to establish pursuit until it is repaired. Burning out an engine causes a -1 penalty to the Victory Roll. Otherwise, turbo II provides a +2 bonus to the Victory Roll (see Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets), but a +1 bonus to Fuzz Checks. Turbo II is never concealed, and cannot be mounted on motorcycles.

Turret: Turrets are never concealed. Weapons mounted in turrets are never concealed. A turret provides a 360-degree arc of fire for weapons mounted in it. A turret requires 4 cargo units to install, but provides 3 cargo units for weapons and ammunition. You cannot mount smokescreens, extra fuel tanks, NOS, or turbo in a turret. Because of their weight and the additional drag they create, turrets reduce speed 100 feet per round (roughly 50 MPH) and cause a -1 penalty to the Victory Roll (see Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets). Turrets grant a +4 bonus to Fuzz Checks in addition to the bonus for unconcealed equipment.

Table 5-16: Compiled Vehicle Data

General			*Capacity*				*Performance*				*Defense*		
				Vic. Roll						Max.			Hull
Name	Size	Crew	Cost	Mod.	Pass.	Cargo	Init.	Man.	Speed	Speed	Def.	DR	Points
Economy Cars	Huge	Normal +2 (1)	$15,000	-1	4	3	+7	+5	220 ft.	100 mph	14	7	20
Luxury Cars	Huge	Normal +2 (1)	$40,000	+0	4	4	+7	+7	265 ft.	120 mph	14	7	35
Mid-Size Cars	Huge	Normal +2 (1)	$20,000	+0	5	4	+6	+5	235 ft.	109 mph	14	7	25
Motorcycles													
Racer	Large	Normal +2 (1)	$17,000	+2	0	1	+14	+11	460 ft.	210 mph	18	3	3
Touring	Large	Normal +2 (1)	$18,000	+1	1	2	+13	+11	330 ft.	150 mph	18	3	5
Other Vehicles													
Armored Truck	Huge	Skilled +4 (2)	$100,000	-1	0	34	+5	+5	215 ft.	98 mph	14	14	40
Limousine	Huge	Skilled +4 (1)	$175,000	+0	7	4	+7	+6	240 ft.	110 mph	14	7	35
Moving Truck	Huge	Normal +2 (1)	$95,000	-1	2	310	+4	+3	210 ft.	95 mph	14	7	35
Performance Cars													
Muscle Car	Huge	Normal +2 (1)	$16,000	+2	1	3	+9	+7	430 ft.	195 mph	14	7	30
Import Racer	Large	Normal +1 (1)	$20,000	+2	1	2	+13	+11	355 ft.	160 mph	18	7	30
Pick-up Trucks	Huge	Normal +2 (1)	$21,000	-1	2	24	+6	+5	220 ft.	100 mph	14	7	30
Vans	Huge	Normal +2 (1)	$21,000	-1	1	34	+5	+3	215 ft.	98 mph	14	7	30
Vehicles Not on the Open Market													
Police Cruiser	Huge	Skilled +4 (1)	NA	+0	4	5	+9	+8	290 ft.	130 mph	14	7	30
Police Interceptor	Huge	Skilled +4 (1)	NA	+2	3	3	+12	+9	370 ft.	170 mph	14	7	25

Compiled Vehicle Data Information Key

General: This category includes name of the vehicle, size, and typical crew skill for Drive checks, and price.

Capacity: This category shows the vehicle's capacity for passengers and cargo.

Performance: This category provides initiative and maneuver modifiers and speeds.

Defense: This category covers defense, damage resistance, and hull points.

Name: Vehicle's name. Vehicles appear in the same order and category in which their descriptions appear.

Size: The size category of the vehicle from Table 5-2: Vehicle Sizes. Actual vehicle length and the squares occupied by the vehicle appear in the vehicle descriptions.

Crew: This column shows the typical crew quality and the modifier for Drive checks (see Man., below). A parenthetical note shows the number of crew necessary to drive or pilot the vehicle. See Table 5-7: Vehicle Crew Quality for an explanation of crew quality and to find the modifiers for attack rolls.

Cost: Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price in United States dollars.

Vic. Roll Mod: This modifies the team's Victory Roll (see Chapter 6: Hitting the Streets).

Pass: Number of passengers using the standard seating arrangement.

Cargo: Cargo units of storage space (approximately 5 cubic feet each) when using the standard seating arrangement. The cargo capacity of pick-up trucks is based on the dimensions of the bed, doubled because there is no height limit.

Init: Vehicle initiative modifier. See the vehicle descriptions for factors that add to this number. Only use this number when determining initiative by vehicle instead of by individual characters.

Man: Vehicle maneuver modifier. Use this number to make Drive checks for GM-controlled vehicles. See the vehicle descriptions for factors that add to this number

Speed: The distance the vehicle travels, in feet, in one movement action.

Max. Speed: The maximum speed of the vehicle given in miles per hour.

Def: The total Defense rating of the vehicle. See the vehicle descriptions for factors that add to this number and to see how much cover the vehicle provides to crew and passengers.

DR: The amount of Damage Reduction subtracted from damage done to the vehicle.

Hull Points: The amount of damage the vehicle can withstand before it ceases to function.

Chapter Six

Hitting the Streets

This chapter provides the basic information you'll need to make the mid-'70s, the golden age of cross-country race movies, come alive on your table top. Load up an 8-track and turn on the mood lights. We're going for a ride to the past.

1976

While the tires squeal and racers duck gunfire from greedy opponents, the world beyond the race just keeps on truckin'. Here are a few high (and low) points from 1976 to help you flesh out your *Thunderball Rally* campaign.

World Events

• Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams (both from Northern Ireland) win the Nobel Peace Prize.
• Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot becomes prime minister (and virtual dictator) of Cambodia after Prince Sihanouk steps down (April 2).
• Israeli airborne commandos attack Uganda's Entebbe Airport and free 103 hostages held by pro-Palestinian hijackers of Air France plane; one Israeli and several Ugandan soldiers killed in raid (July 4).
• 19-month civil war ends in Lebanon after threatening to escalate to global level (Nov.).

U.S. Events

President: Gerald R. Ford
Vice President: Nelson A. Rockefeller
Population: 218,035,164
Life expectancy: 72.9 years
Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000): 52.9
Property Crime Rate (per 1,000): 48.2

• US Supreme Court rules that blacks and other minorities are entitled to retroactive job seniority (March 24).
• Ford signs Federal Election Campaign Act (May 11).
• US Supreme Court rules that death penalty is not inherently cruel or unusual and is a constitutionally acceptable form of punishment (July 3).
• Nation celebrates Bicentennial (July 4).
• Mysterious disease strikes American Legion convention in Philadelphia, eventually claiming 29 lives (Aug. 4).
• Jimmy Carter elected US President (Nov. 2).

Crime

• The Summer of Sam: "Son of Sam" killer David Berkowitz kills his first victim, July 29, 1976.
• Ted Bundy sentenced to 15 years in prison in Utah (he escapes in 1977).
• Joseph Pistone (Donnie Brasco) infiltrates the Bonanno crime syndicate in New York, September, 1976.
• October 15, 1976: Death of Carlo Gambino, head of the Gambino crime family, in Long Island, NY.

Sports

Super Bowl: Pittsburgh d. Dallas (21-17)
World Series: Cincinnati d. NY Yankees (4-0)
NBA Championship: Boston d. Phoenix (4-2)
Stanley Cup: Montreal d. Philadelphia (4-0)
Wimbledon Women: Chris Evert d. E. Cawley (6-3 4-6 8-6)
Wimbeldon Men: Bjorn Borg d. I. Nastase (6-4 6-2 9-7)
Kentucky Derby Champion: Bold Forbes
NCAA Basketball Championship: Indiana d. Michigan (86-68)
NCAA Football Champions: Pittsburgh (12-0-0)

Entertainment

Pulitzer Prizes
Fiction: *Humboldt's Gift*, Saul Bellow
Music: *Air Music*, Ned Rorem
Drama: *A Chorus Line*, Conceived by Michael Bennett

Academy Award, Best Picture: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Saul Zaentz and Michael Douglas, producers (United Artists)
Nobel Prize for Literature: Saul Bellow (US)
Record of the Year: "Love Will Keep Us Together," Captain and Tennille
Album of the Year: *Still Crazy After All These Years*, Paul Simon (Columbia)
Song of the Year: "Send in the Clowns," Stephen Sondheim, songwriter
Miss America: Tawney Elaine Godin (NY)

• The Steadicam is used for the first time in *Rocky*.
• Philip Glass completes *Einstein on the Beach*, the first widely known example of minimalist composition.
• NBC broadcasts *Gone with the Wind* and scores record-breaking ratings.

At the Box Office: *Rocky*, *Taxi Driver*, *Network*, *All the President's Men.*

On the Radio: "Baby, I Love Your Way" (Peter Frampton), "Beth" (KISS), "Blinded by the Light" (Manfred Mann's Earth Band), "Bohemian Rhapsody" (Queen), "Car Wash" (Rose Royce), "(Don't Fear) The Reaper" (Blue Oyster Cult), "Dream Weaver" (Gary Wright), "Fernando" (ABBA), "Free Bird" (Lynyrd Skynyrd), "More than a Feeling" (Boston), "Play that Funky Music" (Wild Cherry), "(Shake, Shake, Shake) Shake Your Booty" (K.C. and the Sunshine Band), "Take it to the Limit" (Eagles), "Turn the Beat Around" (Vicki Sue Robinson).

Books
• Raymond Carver, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*
• Judith Guest, *Ordinary People*
• Alex Haley, *Roots*
• Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*
• Robert Lowell, *Selected Poems*
• Gabriel García Márquez, *Autumn of the Patriarch*
• Gore Vidal, *1876*

Science

• Air France and British Airways begin the first regularly scheduled commercial supersonic transport (SST) flights.
• Viking I lands on Mars.
• The US Navy tests the Tomahawk cruise missile.

• Richard Leakey discovers a 1.5 million year old *Homo erectus* skull in Kenya.
• Cosmic string theory first postulated by Thomas Kibble.

The Thunderball Rally

Watch any of the *Cannonball Run* movies once and you'll realize that the race is just an excuse for the scenes that happen on the road. The race is not the plot of the story, but it is what puts the characters in the middle of the plot. In *Thunderball Rally*, those scenes are known as Pit Stops.

Pit Stops

Pit Stops are encounters involving racers and their opponents, and sometimes other NPCs. Taken together, these scenes make up the story of your game. Most scenes should have goals related to the race (see The Victory Roll, below). For example, picking up a hitchhiker who has good Repair skills should grant a +1 bonus to the Victory Roll. Making a particularly tricky maneuver that's central to the scene (jumping a washed-out bridge or through a train boxcar) should grant a +1 bonus. Accomplishing the goal should help the racers toward victory. Encounters generally take the form of character encounters, driving encounters, or action encounters.

Character Encounters

These encounters help players define their characters. If a bunny hops out into the road in front of their car, does the crew swerve or run it over? Do they stop for the sexy hitchhiker on the side of the road? Here are some examples of possible character encounters:

• The racers wreck their car, and must find another to finish the race. They may buy or steal one.
• The racers encounter a crooked entrepreneur who bet a ton of money on them. Will they cheat for him? This could or could not be a trap set by the people running the race. What happens if they catch the racers cheating?
• The racers spot a sexy hitchhiker on the road and choose whether or not to stop.
• The law busts the racers, but offers to waive the charges if they'll rat out the other racers and the organizers. The racers may buy their freedom, or they may try to escape.
• An orphan stows away in the back of the racers' car. He's got nowhere to go, and maybe he even has some skills that will come in handy. He just wants to get to California.
• The racers come upon a family-filled RV on a one-lane road. They're driving very slowly. Depending on how you handle this, it could easily become a driving encounter.
• The racers encounter a traffic jam.
• The racers come across what appears to be an easily knocked-over armored car. Will they go for the fast money while risking the ire of the cops and losing the race?

Driving Encounters

These encounters are about going as fast as you can while still maintaining control of the car.

• The racers encounter a police or FBI roadblock. Depending on its position, they may be able to go around, or they may have to abruptly turn around. Either way, a chase ensues.
• There's a bridge out. If the racers jump it successfully, give them a bonus on their roll to win the race.
• A long train blocks the road. A gravel pile nearby could provide a ramp, but the racers have to get their car through the open doors of a boxcar. Give them a +1 bonus on their Victory Roll if they make it.
• One of the other racing crews sets an ambush for the racers.
• A motorcycle gang wants the racers' ride, and doesn't particularly care if the racers are in a selling kind of mood.
• Another crew sabotages the racers' car while they sleep, and now they have no brakes (and therefore can't reduce speed normally).
• Wreckers set traps in the road to cause accidents so they can salvage the vehicles.

Action Encounters

These encounters happen while the racers are outside their vehicles.

• The racers discover that the gas station they were counting on for refueling in the middle of nowhere has been abandoned. They investigate, looking for enough gas to make the next town.
• The racers stop for food at a truck stop manned by gun-toting, slack jawed yokels.
• The racers swing into a 7-11 for chips and water as it is being robbed. The robbers want the heroes' car for their getaway.
• A crop duster flies overhead, releasing some sort of gas that makes it difficult to see or makes the road slippery. Someone is cheating, but whom?
• The racers come across a road gang hijacking a fuel truck.

Encounter Enhancers

It's one thing to jump your car over a gulch. It's another thing altogether to jump that gulch with three cop cars on your tail, a gun-crazy stowaway bride in the back seat, and a box of unstable chemicals in the trunk. Use some of the following ideas to bring cinematic spice to your *Thunderball Rally* encounters.

• Firework stands always lend needed spice to encounters.
• Tanker trucks loaded with flammable liquids.
• Dishonest police, or car salesmen.
• An ice cream truck. The kids love ice cream.
• Bad weather.
• Animals in the road.

Stories

Stories in *Thunderball Rally* begin just before the race, and end when the race ends. The following race outline assumes that the player character racers have a rival, a sleazebag hustler named Steve Jones. The PC racers respect, and sometimes even like, Jones and his generally well-meaning crew but their rivalry is so intense that both crews care more about beating each other than about winning the race.

This year Jones has an expensive import racer with a souped-up engine and a new driver. What the player characters do not know is that the ace, Franco Bertollini, is a ringer. The rest of the year, he is a professional Formula 1 driver in Europe.

Opening Scene

The PC racers meet the other crews at Gigino in New York City the night before the race. They renew their rivalry with Steve, trading good-natured insults, and he introduces them to his new driver, "Frank."

Scene Two
Tensions are high in the warehouse garage the night before the race. Every crew meticulously checks over their vehicle one last time. The rival crew reports that someone sabotaged their car. Steve does not blame the heroes, he just warns them to keep their eyes open.

Scene Three
The race is in progress. The heroes and the rival team meet when they both choose the same ferry to cross a river. The ferry is a quarter of a mile away, and untying from the dock. There is room on the back of the ferry for only one more car. Whoever makes it gains a significant advantage (+2 on the Victory Roll, see below).

Scene Four
At a roadside diner and gas station, the player characters run into another team. The other team's car has been sabotaged and they are out of the race. They think someone is trying to fix the race, and they ask the player characters to "go get" the team that sabotaged their car.

Scene Five
The player characters catch up to the saboteurs and a high-speed battle ensues on the road.

Closing Scene
At the docks in San Diego, the heroes discover who won the race, find out whether or not they beat Steve and Franco, all grudges are settled, and the Cosa Nostra sponsors throw the Family members who tried to fix the race into the ocean.

Reputation: Good Attention
Every racer has a reputation of one sort or another. As a racer advances in levels, he or she gains a Reputation bonus that the GM sometimes can allow the character to use with certain Charisma-based skills in certain situations (see Chapter 1: Characters for details on your racer's Reputation). There are a number of ways and situations in which Reputation comes into play.

In general, a high Reputation bonus benefits a racer. Those who recognize the racer are more likely to help him (or do what he asks). However, a high Reputation bonus also makes it difficult for the racer to avoid unwanted attention (see The Fuzz, below).

Generally, a racer doesn't get a choice whether or not to apply a Reputation bonus. When the GM decides that a racer's Reputation can be relevant to a scene, the racer's player must apply the Reputation bonus to the check.

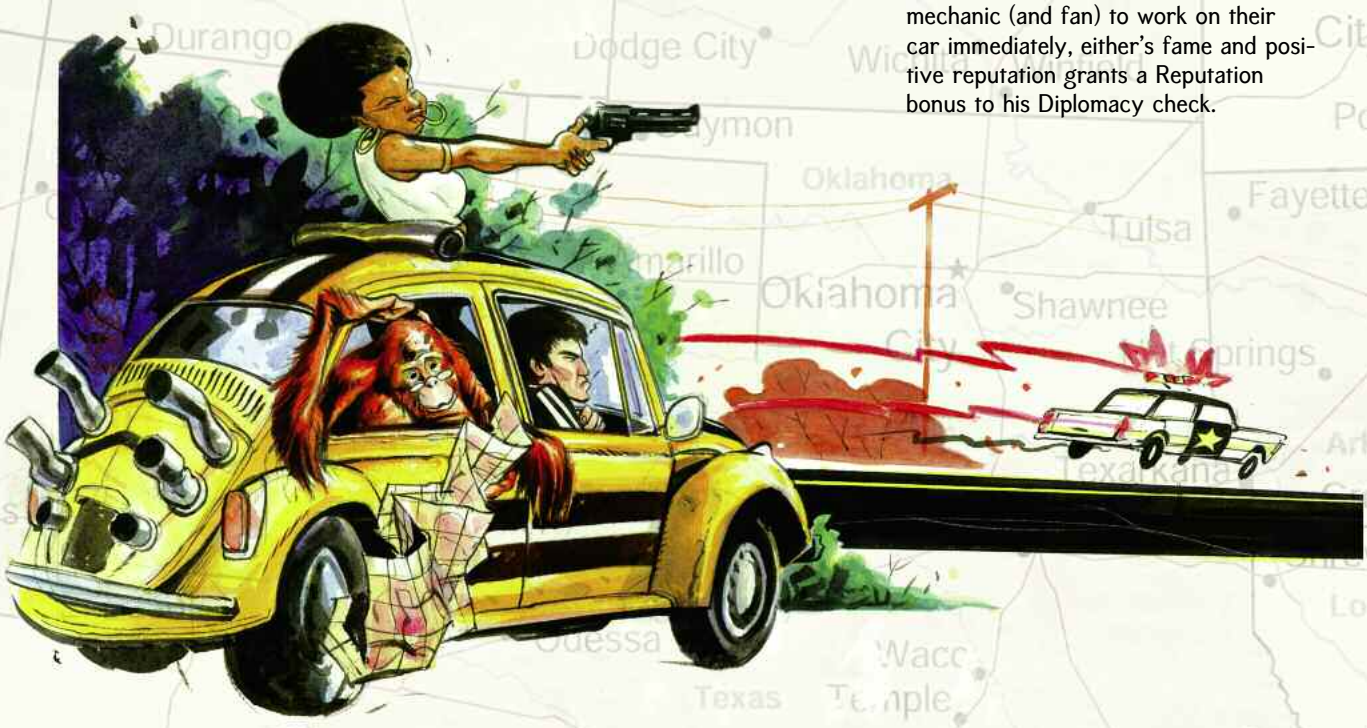
Fame and Infamy
Most racers with a high Reputation bonus (+4 or higher) are considered "famous." That is, their reputation is generally positive. The Circuit Hero feat adds to this positive reputation.

However, some racers are infamous, which results in different reactions. As a general rule, a racer with the Circuit Heel feat is considered infamous (No racer can select both the Circuit Hero and the Circuit Heel feat).

Also, at the GM's option, a racer might be considered infamous in certain situations due to events that transpired in a previous race. For instance, if your racer caused a lot of property damage in Toledo, he or she would be considered infamous when attempting to interact with folks in Toledo.

Using the Reputation Bonus
Whenever the GM decides that a racer's reputation can be a factor in an encounter (usually when interacting with law enforcement, race crews, race fans, or reporters), the racer's Reputation bonus is added to the following skill checks: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate.

In situations in which the character's positive reputation or fame can sway another character's reaction, the racer adds to the skill check. For instance, if Steve Jones and Franco Bertollini have a breakdown and need the local mechanic (and fan) to work on their car immediately, either's fame and positive reputation grants a Reputation bonus to his Diplomacy check.



In situations in which the character's negative reputation or infamy can help sway another character's reaction, the bonus adds to the skill check. For example, Knuckles Magee is tailing Steve and Franco and needs the mechanic to tell him which route the heroes took out of town. His notoriety and reputation as a dangerous bodyguard and thug grants him a Reputation bonus on his Intimidate check.

In situations where the racer's negative reputation or infamy makes another character react poorly toward him, the Reputation bonus is subtracted from the skill check (it becomes a penalty instead of a bonus). For example, if Steve or Franco double park while picking up some food, the higher of their two Reputations is a penalty when trying to Bluff their way out of a parking ticket (and could get them some unwanted attention, see The Fuzz, below).

Remember that the GM must determine that a character's fame or infamy can come into play in a given situation for the Reputation bonus to apply. Most people on the street won't know you from Richard Petty (six-time Winston Cup champion by 1976, and most popular Winston Cup Series Driver in 1976), and can't be influenced by your reputation. Other notes regarding Reputation bonuses and these Charisma-based skills follow.

Bluff: In general, being either famous or infamous aids Bluff checks. However, any Bluff check made to deny or hide your identity ("I don't have 200 moving violations, there must be someone else with the same name") automatically turns the racer's Reputation bonus into a penalty for that check.

Diplomacy: Infamous characters use their Reputation bonus as a penalty when making Diplomacy checks (it's tough to talk your way out of a speeding ticket when the police think you're a killer).

Gather Information: People are more willing to help someone they know, whether happily (for a Circuit Hero) or fearfully (for a Circuit Heel).

Intimidate: A famous character can use his reputation to "throw his weight around," but he gets to use only half of his Reputation bonus (round down). An infamous character, on the other hand, uses his full Reputation bonus when making an Intimidate check.

The Finish Line

In 1936, the RMS *Queen Mary* was the largest ocean liner in the world. She held the Blue Riband for fastest North Atlantic crossing for over 14 years. In 1940 she was refitted as a troop ship Initially she carried 5,500 troops. Her capacity later increased to over 15,000 (a complete American Army division). She carried all sorts of dignitaries through the years, from the royal family to Winston Churchill to Bob Hope. In 1966, the Cunard Line sold her to the City of Long Beach, where she is now permanently docked. In addition to a 150-room hotel, in 1976 she also contains restaurants, a shopping area, and the Museum of the Sea. The *Queen Mary* is Long Beach's most famous permanent resident.

The Fuzz: Bad Attention

To determine when racers attract the attention of law enforcement, and how much attention they attract, the GM makes a Fuzz Check (DC 20) any time he feels that the PCs' actions might bring them under legal scrutiny. Assume the law enforcement crew are Skilled, so they get a +4 to their check. Add all the following modifiers that apply each time the GM makes a Fuzz Check.

Circumstantial Modifiers

Unconcealed equipment*	+1
Unrepaired vehicle damage	+1
Turbo II	+1
Turret	+4

Hero Action

Speeding	+2
Blowing up buildings	+4
Shooting firearms	+2
Vehicle-related deaths	+6

Modifier for Location

Urban	+6
Suburban	+4
Rural	+2
Middle of Nowhere	+0

*This modifier is for each piece of unconcealed equipment.

Fuzz Check Result

Less than 20	No attention
20-25	One police vehicle takes up the chase
30-35	Police block the road ahead with four vehicles and give chase.
36+	A dozen police cars (some of them interceptors) give chase.

If police take up the chase, run a driving encounter (see Pit Stops, above). If the racers disable all the pur-

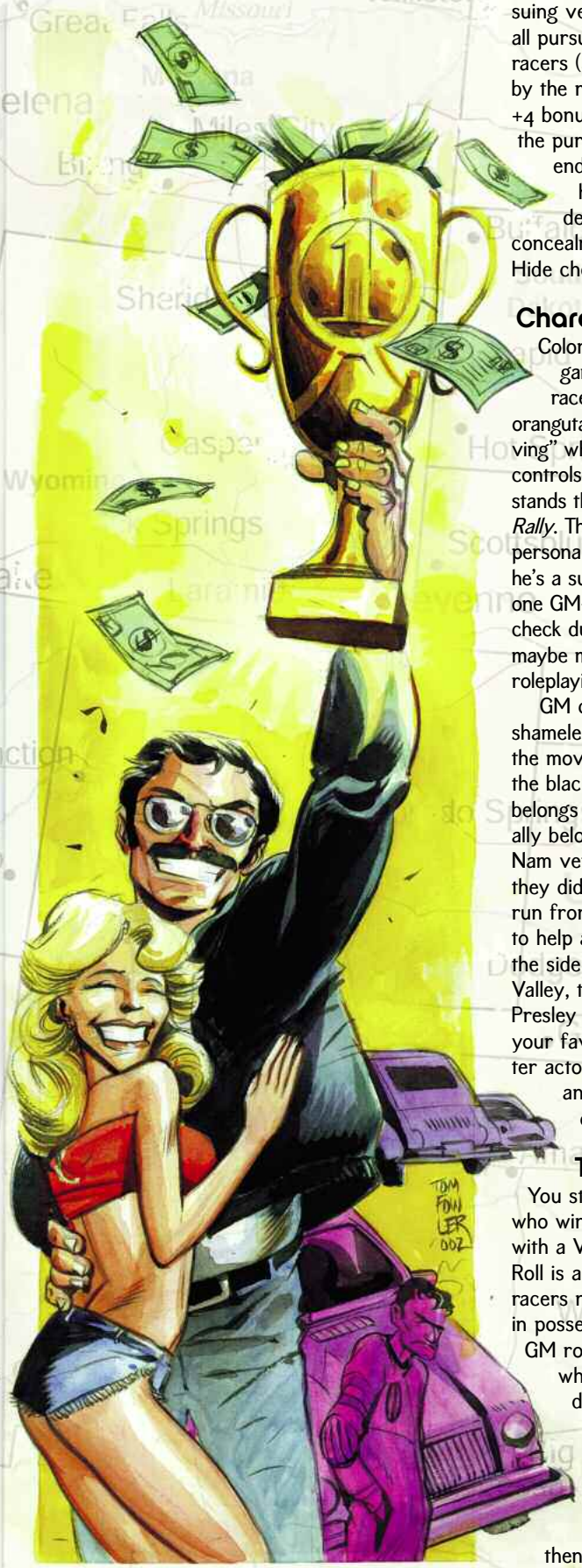
Table 6-1: Victory Roll Modifiers

Source Modifier	
Equipment	
Each extra armor	-1
Burned out engine	-1
Turret	-1
Extra Fuel Tanks	+1
Turbo I	+1
Turbo II	+2
Scene Modifiers	
Accomplish goal of the Pit Stop (as set by the GM)	+1
Disable* opponent's vehicle	+1
Destroy opponent's vehicle	+2
Incapacitate** opposing driver	+1
Incapacitate** opposing navigator	+1
Your vehicle disabled*	-1
Your vehicle destroyed	-2
Your driver incapacitated**	-1
Your navigator incapacitated**	-1
Additional Modifiers	
Each day spent recovering from injuries	-2
Each time you attract unwanted attention (see The Fuzz)	-1
Superior Planning (the navigator provides this assistance bonus with a Drive check (DC 10))	+2

*Disabled means the vehicle crew must make a Repair check to get the vehicle moving again.

**Incapacitated, in this case, includes being dead.

The maximum bonus for any scene is +10. There is no minimum. NPC racers only earn scene modifiers for scenes in which they and the PCs both appear. Otherwise they get modifiers for equipment and may attempt to gain the Superior Planning bonus.



suing vehicles, the scene ends. If all pursuers lose sight of the racers (a Search check opposed by the racer's Hide check, with a +4 bonus to Search assuming the pursuers are skilled), pursuit ends. The GM uses his or her best judgment when determining if sufficient concealment exists to allow a Hide check.

Characters

Colorful is always better in this game. A crew that wants to race a limousine with an orangutan in the front seat "driving" while they handle the real controls from the back understands the spirit of *Thunderball Rally*. The navigator with a split personality who sometimes thinks he's a superhero deserves at least one GM-granted +2 bonus to a check during the game, and maybe more. Reward colorful roleplaying.

GM characters should steal shamelessly from television and the movies. It's much more fun if the black van the heroes think belongs to their opponents actually belongs to a group of Viet Nam veterans accused of crimes they didn't commit and on the run from the Army. If they stop to help a car broken down on the side of the highway in Death Valley, the owner should be Elvis Presley or Frank Sinatra. Pick your favorite Hollywood character actors and use their voices and mannerisms for GM characters.

The Victory Roll

You still need to determine who wins the race. You do so with a Victory Roll. A Victory Roll is a d20 check made by all racers not in a hospital and still in possession of a vehicle. The GM rolls for NPC racers, and whoever is playing the driver rolls for the heroes. Each vehicle has a Victory Roll Modifier, as outlined in Chapter 5. Add that modifier to the d20 roll, and then add any of the modifiers on Table 6-1: Victory Roll Modifiers, if applicable.

In the unlikely event of a tie, the top racers spot each other about a mile from the *Queen Mary*. They must race each other to the finish. Throw lots of obstacles and turns in their path so the fastest car isn't automatically the winner. Whoever wins the final mile wins the race.

Filmography

To truly understand the spirit of *Thunderball Rally*, you've got to immerse yourself in racing movies filled with hijinks and car-fueled mayhem. Here are a few choice examples, courtesy of imdb.com.

•Vanishing Point
Barry Newman delivers a supercharged Dodge Charger from Colorado to California, and bets he can make the trip in 15 hours. Considered by many to be the finest car movie ever made. (1971)

•Death Race 2000
Cult cinema legend David Carradine, Sylvester Stallone, and others compete in a cross-country car race in which racers score points for running over pedestrians. Brilliant. (1975)

•Every Which Way But Loose
What's better than a movie in which Clint Eastwood plays a fistfighting semi driver? One that also stars an orangutan, of course. (1978)

•Cannonball Run
Burt Reynolds, King of the Car Movie, stars in the film that perfected the genre. If you only rent one of these movies, this is the one. (1981)

Other Notable Flicks
Bullitt (1968), *Le Mans* (1971), *Gone in 60 Seconds* (1974), *Gumball Rally* (1976), *Mother, Jugs & Speed* (1976).

Drivers

Level	1	3	5	7
Hit Points	9	19	29	39
Initiative	+6	+6	+7	+7
Speed	30	30	30	30
Defense	13	14	16	16
Reputation	+2	+2	+3	+4
Attacks	-1 melee, +1 ranged	+1 melee, +3 ranged	+2 melee, +6 ranged	+4 melee, +7 ranged
Damage	2d8 (sawed-off shotgun)	2d8 (sawed-off shotgun)	2d8 (sawed-off shotgun)	2d8 (sawed-off shotgun)
Saves	Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2	Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +2	Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +3
Abilities	Str 8, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14	Str 8, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14	Str 8, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14	Str 8, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
Skills	Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Drive +6, Intimidate +6, Spot +5	Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Drive +8, Intimidate +10 Spot +9	Bluff +10, Dipl. +12, Drive +11, Intimid. +12, Spot +11	Bluff +12, Diplomacy +14, Drive +13, Intimidate +14, Spot +13
Feats	Imp. Init., Infamy, Vehicle Combat	Alertness, Imp. Init., Infamy, Influence, Vehicle Combat	Alertness, Daredevil, Imp. Init., Infamy, Influence, Veh. Cbt.	Alertness, Daredevil, Drive-By, Frightful Presence, Imp. Init. Infamy, Influence, Veh. Cbt.
Class Abilities	Breaker, Breaker	Breaker, Breaker; Coordinate, Uncanny Dodge	Breaker, Breaker; Coordinate, Presence, Uncanny Dodge	Attract, Breaker, Breaker; Coordinate, Presence, Uncanny Dodge
Action Points	1	2	3	4
Vehicles:	*First and Third Level:* Muscle Car with two forward-firing, fire-linked 7.62mm machineguns; ram horns; and an extra fuel tank. *Fifth and Seventh Level:* Muscle Car with turbo II, hub blades, ram horns, and two forward-firing, fire-linked 7.62mm machineguns, and extra armor.			

Navigators

Level	1	3	5	7
Hit Points	9	19	29	39
Initiative	+0	+4	+4	+4
Speed	30	30	30	30
Defense	11	13	14	14
Reputation	+1	+1	+2	+3
Attacks	-1 melee, +0 ranged	+1 melee, +2 ranged	+2 melee, +3 ranged	+4 melee, +6 ranged
Damage	2d6 (pistol)	2d6 (pistol)	2d6 (pistol)	2d6 (pistol)
Saves	Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4	Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5	Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6	Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7
Abilities	Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13	Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13	Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13	Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13
Skills	Disable Device +6, Drive +4, Knowledge (applied sciences) +6, Listen +6, Repair +9, Search +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6, Treat Injury +6	Dis. Dev. +10, Drive +6, Know (app. sci.) +8, Listen +8, Repair +13, Search +8, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Treat Injury +8	Dis. Dev. +13, Drive +8, Know. (app. sci.) +11, Listen +10, Repair +16, Search +11, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10, Treat Injury +10	Diplomacy +3, Dis. Dev. +15, Drive +10, Know. (app. sci.) +13, Listen +12, Repair +18, Search +13, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12, Treat Injury +12
Feats	Back Seat Driver Gearhead	Back Seat Driver, Gearhead, Imp. Init.	Back Seat Driver, Gearhead, Imp. Init.	Back Seat Driver, Gearhead, Imp. Init. Point Blank Shot
Class Abilities	Skill Emphasis (Repair)	Skill Emph. (Rep.), Focus, Secret of Ducking	Skill Emph. (Rep.), Focus, Secret of Ducking, Breaker 19, Trick	Skill Emph. (Rep.), Focus, Secret of Ducking, Breaker 19, Trick, Secret of Marksmanship
Action Points	1	2	3	4

Bodyguards

You may also use these characters as "mechanics," gun-toting slack-jawed yokels, or any time you need a combat threat.

Level	1	3	5	7
Hit Points	11	24	37	50
Initiative	+2	+2	+3	+3
Speed	30	30	30	30
Defense	14	15	18	19
Reputation	+0	+1	+1	+2
Attacks	+3 melee, +3 ranged	+5 melee, +5 ranged	+7 melee, +8 ranged	+9/+4 melee, +10/+5 ranged
Damage	1d6+2 (tire iron), 2d6 (tommy gun)	1d6+2 (tire iron), 2d6 (tommy gun)	1d6+2 (tire iron), 2d8 (assault rifle)	1d6+2 (tire iron), 2d8 (assault rifle)
Saves	Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1	Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2	Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3
Abilities	Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8	Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8	Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8	Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Skills	Bluff +3, Drive +6, Intimidate +3, Jump +6 Tumble +6	Bluff +5, Drive +8, Intim. +5, Jump +8, Tumble +8	Bluff +7, Drive +11, Intim. +7, Jump +10, Tumble +11	Bluff +9, Drive +13, Intim. +9, Jump +12, Tumble +13
Feats	Adv. Firearms Prof., Quick Draw, Strafe	Adv. Firearms. Prof., Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Strafe	Adv. Firearms. Prof., Far Shot, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Strafe	Adv. Firearms Prof., Far Shot, Martial Arts, Imp. Martial Arts, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Strafe
Class Abilities	N/A	Extreme effort I	Extreme effort I	Extreme effort II
Action Points	1	2	3	4